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AUTOBIOGRAPHIC REMINISCENCES

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Peterhead

*To Mr Charles Moir
with kind regards
from L. and J. S. Kidd*

AUTOBIOGRAPHIC REMINISCENCES

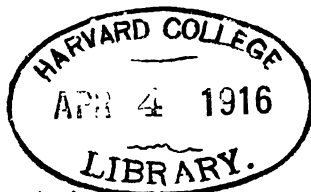


BY THE LATE
JOHN SIMPSON KIDD
ABERDEEN

Printed for Private Circulation

1874

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PREFATORY NOTE.

SOME prefatory explanations may perhaps seem necessary even to a few chapters of "Autobiographic Reminiscences" printed only for private circulation. But in the present instance I really have very little to say. My father, the late Mr. J. S. Kidd, spent much of the leisure time of his later days in jotting down, as they occurred to him, recollections of his earlier years, and of his brief but varied and active military experiences. The latter especially seemed to have made an indelible impression on his memory. Many an hour, when his children had begun to look over his knee, and to show some strength of wonder, if not of intelligence, did he devote to relating stories of his soldiering days. He "fought his battles o'er again," not so much, as it seemed to me, from a spirit of bravado, as because the stirring and ghastly scenes he had witnessed in the few busy years of his military life, had taken so strong a hold on his imagination, that he must now and then tell the story to get rid of the haunting images. Once, many years ago, he wrote out a careful account of those "Experiences of a Soldier." He read this narrative, I think, at a meeting of "The Lyceum," a literary club then in vigorous existence in Aberdeen. The soldier's tale, as I have heard, was very favourably criticised by the members of "The Lyceum," and afterwards warmly commended by other friends who read it. At length, however, in the course of its movements among flattering acquaintances, it fell into the hands of a clergyman then resident in Aberdeen, or somewhere in the neighbourhood. He, too, was very complimentary; and perhaps it may be taken as good evidence of the sincerity of his commendations, that he ever after kept the MS., notwithstanding more than one reminder that it was not his own. My father, at all events, never saw it again; and when, in his later years, he had rather more leisure than previously in his long and hardworking life, he endeavoured to make good the loss by re-writing his early recollections, civil as well as military. The following pages are the result. The manuscripts he left were somewhat fragmentary; but I have endeavoured, as carefully as possible, to piece them together into a continuous narrative, not hesitating now and then to use a little new cement, where it seemed necessary. I have—not unnaturally, perhaps, as some may think—found the story very interesting; and have even ventured to believe that some of my father's old friends and acquaintances might also find interest in its perusal. This is why these "Reminiscences" have been printed.

LEWIS KIDD.

DECEMBER, 1874.



Part First—My Forebears.





Autobiographic Reminiscences.

MY FORBEARS.

MY father sometimes spoke of his ancestry. They were not much, perhaps. They did not come in with the Conqueror; no record, at all events, existed tracing them to that great source of modern greatness. They were not distinguished in the field of battle; they were certainly not statesmen, nor even common-place Members of Parliament. Nay, I never heard him even claim for them the distinction of having been Provosts, Baillies, or Town Councillors, nor to have been related to such important and useful personages. But they were—as I often have heard my father state—sufferers for the faith in the dark days of what was known as the Claverhouse persecution. According to my father's account, his father was one of two brothers who fled northwards from the bloody hunters of the stern Covenanters, and who settled about Langside, some six miles from Peterhead. My father's grandfather was William Kidd, and little more seems to have been known of him. He married Christian Taylor, and had a pretty numerous family—one, the third son, migrating to Ireland, and disappearing for ever from the view of his friends in the grim shadows of that troubled country. It may be of equal importance to state that my father's father's name was John; that he married one Christian Grieve; and that they lived and died upon a croft a few miles west of Ellon. They had but one child—Alexander, my father. This fact sometimes troubled my mother in after life; for, like many Scotchwomen, though she had a "shrewd wit," and was intelligent, especially well-versed in traditionary folk-lore, she occasionally imbibed not a little of the superstitious terrors which that lore encouraged. She knew the prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer, and had, perhaps,

more faith in them than she cared to avow; especially did this one strike her, and sometimes disconcert her after her marriage—

“Brig of Balgownie, wight's thy wa’;
Wi’ a wife’s ae son, and a mare’s ae foal,
Down shalt thou fa’.”

Her husband was a “wife’s ae son;” he trafficked much in horses during his lifetime; and there was nothing improbable in the supposition that he might, on some of the many occasions he went to Aberdeen, be astride a “mare’s ae foal,” and so become the unhappy instrument of fulfilling the gloomy Rhymer’s prophecy. But he did not; the brig did not fa’—has not yet fallen, and looks as if it would hold on for many years in spite of Thomas and his rhymes.

My father was bred a shoemaker; but his health failing, he took to farm service. In 1790 he married, and resumed his trade of shoemaker in Peterhead. But again his health failed; and he took a croft a little to the south-east of Peterhead, on the seashore. Here he prospered, and made some money—not so much off the croft as by travelling the country with horse and cart; at one time carrying clothing goods to the doors of dwellers in the inland country; at another time supplying his customers with fish. He was thrifty and frugal in his ways. His prospects improved; he became, for one in his station, a man of substance. About 1804, he bought a piece of land bearing the prosaic name of Cowhills, situated on the Aberdeen turnpike road, about three miles south of Peterhead. On this spot he built a house which, at that time, was the admiration of the locality. Few were to be seen like it in country districts. It was the day of “fell” houses: the luxury of stone and lime was rarely thought of by the simple and thrifty inhabitants. But the house built by my father was of stone and lime. It was two storeys in height; and looked as if it had been built for the country house of a Provost, or at least a First Baillie. But country houses were not much in vogue in those days; and it is, therefore, a puzzle to me what object my father had in view in building it. For it seems clear he did not mean himself to inhabit it, as soon after he built another and much more modest mansion, with the apparent intention of occupying it, whatever he may have meant to do with the other. The big house itself is still standing. I saw it only a few years ago; it had then been dignified by the title of “The House of Cowhills.” The old burn in which we youngsters “paidled,” and on the banks of which we “pou’d the gowans fine,” still wimpled on its way; but it was partially concealed by a bridge; and the marshy spot in front of the house had been converted into a handsome garden, surrounded by a substantial wall. Other improvements had been made; and the whole, as I was informed, then let at a rent of £70 a-year.

But my father's prosperity did not continue. Misfortune came, even when the world seemed most to smile on him. His cattle died in considerable numbers, and things seemed all to go wrong at the croft. In short, he let his possession at Cowhills, retired to Peterhead, and once more resumed the shoemaking business. But his health got worse, and his worldly circumstances little better. He removed to Aberdeen, and for fifteen years he laboured under an asthmatic affection, so severe that on only three occasions during that long time did he attempt to lie a night in bed ; and after each attempt it took him several weeks to recover from the injury it inflicted on the system. During all that weary time he had to snatch such rest as he might, propped up by pillows on an arm-chair. During the last twelve-month of his days he was able to reach the outer door but once. At length, on the 27th May, 1827, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, death put an end to his very great sufferings. He was buried in the old ground of the Spittal Kirkyard, in a grave fourteen feet deep ; for then every precaution that was possible had to be taken against the dreaded "body-snatchers." These were times in which medical students had to steal bodies from the graves to be the "subjects" of their enlightenment ; and the people looked on those "body-snatchers" with awe and horror. They were worse than ghosts—worse than witches and warlocks. They horrified the living by disturbing the dead ; and, while known to be substantial human beings, they came to be regarded as elfish thieves, in whom the "de'il himsel" must have had an abiding place. The unfortunate medical professors and students had no legitimate means of procuring subjects for dissection. They were, so to speak, condemned by law to steal what it was essential for the good of mankind that they should procure. But of course the populace did not, and could not, look upon it in this light. They only knew by bitter experience that their nearest and dearest relatives were not safe even in their graves. These were nightly opened, bodies stolen ; and the surviving friends, their feelings already sharpened by a sense of recent loss, held bitter moan over the desecration of what was becoming the last resting-place only in name. Many no doubt exaggerated stories were told of the doings of these "body-snatchers" ; but many, perhaps most, of them were true in the main ; and I shall never forget the horror with which I once saw in the gloaming a man carrying up a lane in Aberdeen a large sack, filled with an evidently heavy substance, towards what was known as the "haunted house"—a building in some way, but I know not how, connected with the medical school. We took it, of course, to be a dead body, and the man bearing the body to be a "body-snatcher" ; and a sharp sense of horror shot through me on witnessing a dead body "untimely ripped" from what should have been its last and peaceful resting-place. It was impossible that such a state of things could continue ; and accordingly an Act was ultimately passed by which

medical subjects could be lawfully procured. Against the working of this Act I have never heard any complaint.

If my father had any marked characteristic it was certainly that of rigid honesty. He would injure no man ; and indeed seemed inclined punctiliously to consider the feelings and rights of others, rather than his own. He hated debt ; and I believe, at his death it could justly be said he owed no man anything. His was an unsuspecting, easy nature. He was, I fear, in consequence, the dupe of designing men, or rogues, to the end of his days, yet I never heard him utter ill of any one. His intellectual powers were moderate, and his reading limited. Scottish history he knew something of, but for all his knowledge in this respect he was indebted to the works of George Buchanan.

Of my mother I must now give some particulars. Her name was Mary Thomson ; and she was born on the 7th October, 1765. I know nothing of her forbears, beyond her great grandfather, whose uncommonly long life and very late marriage preserved his name and local fame. He reached his hundred and second year ; and when a gay bachelor of eighty, he married one Isabel Angus, by whom he had three children, one of whom, however, was "silly." The courageous old man deserves remembrance. John Thomson, my maternal grandfather, was all his days engaged in the manufacture of flax. He resided some time in Elgin, from which place he went to Aberdeen, to some kind of responsible post in what was known as the "Gallowgate Head Factory." Here he remained some twenty-five years ; and it may be interesting and probably surprising to many to learn that his wages during all this time—remember that he had a responsible charge in the concern—were five shillings weekly, with two pounds of a "lie-by." On this munificent sum he contrived to maintain himself, a wife, and five children. He was, too, from all I have heard of him, a man tolerably well informed for his time. But he was a stern and strict theologian, holding that the way of salvation was a very narrow one, and not at all perceptible outside certain well defined and not very wide limits. He belonged to a body called distinctively Seceders—a body generally very strict in their views and doctrines ; but though, I presume, they had their place of worship in Aberdeen at the time my grandfather, John, lived there, their doctrines were not of a severity sufficient to satisfy him. For seven years, it is said, after removing to Aberdeen from Elgin, he never entered a church door. The preachers in the "braif town," it seems, were not to his taste. They did not communicate to their unfortunate lambs "sound doctrine." Nor was the sturdy old flax-worker alone in his convictions as to the unsoundness of the divinity preached in the Aberdeen pulpits at that time. He had eleven brethren of a like mind with himself ; and during these years these independent theologians followed their own way to salvation by

gathering in my grandfather's house, and conducting worship after their own fashion and hearts' desire. Nor did they trust to their own unaided fervour or crude theology. My grandfather possessed a folio copy, in one volume, of "Boston's Works," and regularly, week by week, were the not short sermons in this volume read out to these no doubt devout Seceders, until the whole ponderous volume had been three times gone over. Whether, at the end of the seven years, a sufficiently sound preacher appeared, I know not; but the private meetings came to an end. I have still in my possession the volume of Boston which these rigorous sectarians used. It was bequeathed to my mother on condition that if she had a son named John, it should become his property.

My mother was the eldest daughter of this staunch and incorruptible seceder. She was married to my father, Alexander Kidd, about 1790, outliving him twelve years. She died of apoplexy on the 23rd July, 1839, and was interred in the same grave with her husband. She had wonderful quickness of apprehension, rare retentiveness of memory, and remarkable powers of observation. Much have I regretted, that I did not, while she lived, jot down the recollections of her earlier years, which she was ever ready to pour out, and did so with a copious and lively vivacity which made her worth listening to. She was well acquainted with the history and literature of the Reformation, especially of the Covenanters. I have heard her correct a careless reader in names and dates, as well as in words, while reading the historical or polemical works of the Reformation, or covenanting periods. Bishop Jewel's "Apology for the Church of England"—she did not retain the exclusive sectarian spirit of her father—was a favourite work of hers; and the "Gospel sonnets" of Dr. Erskine she would accurately repeat from beginning to end, and was ever ready to cite from them apt quotations, as the occasion required. Nay, more, she would repeat with verbal accuracy all the paraphrases used in Presbyterian worship, and most of the metrical translations of the Psalms. Her knowledge of the Scriptures, both Old and New, was very remarkable. If a sentence, or intelligible part of a sentence, were mentioned to her, she could generally point out the book, the chapter, and even the verse, or very near to it, where the quotations would be found. Her father, no doubt, had not neglected the inculcation of Scripture lessons; and the daughter seems to have been an apt and not forgetful pupil.

Although I never took the notes of my mother's and father's varied reminiscences of their earlier years—and much regret not having done so—several of them remain firmly fixed in my memory, and it may now be worth while jotting them down. My father was, of course, well acquainted with the work and condition of the farm labourer of his time; and I remember him stating that a

common wage for ordinary labourers was a peck and a half (about $8\frac{1}{2}$ lbs), in some cases two pecks of oatmeal, and 1s 6d in money, per week. He had himself been in farm service where his food consisted of kail "ane an' twenty times in a week." The only change was in the different preparation of the kail. In the morning there was kail porridge—that is, kail boiled and thickened with oatmeal, with milk and oat cakes or barley-meal scones as a second and final course. For dinner, there was again kail, but at this meal it was "chappit"—that is, crushed into a kind of pulp—and "guid kail brose" formed the very substantial dessert. At supper they again had "chappit" kail, with oat cakes or barley scones to follow. Such were the inexpensive meals of the farm-servants some three quarters of a century ago. But few farmers, I believe, fared much better than their labourers. The Scotch farmers were a very frugal race; they are still thrifty, but such frugality as I have mentioned has, I suspect, mostly disappeared from the kitchen as well as the "ben'en," or dining-room, of modern agriculturalists.

The old bridges, like the old streets, of Aberdeen, city as well as county, were excessively narrow. The Brig o' Balgownie, for example, had not too much room for one cart to pass, and certainly not space for two. It was the cause of many quarrels. If two men, with horses and carts, approached the bridge from opposite ends at the same time, it seldom seemed to enter their heads the one to wait till the other had crossed. They knew that it was impossible to pass each other on the narrow bridge; but they scorned compromise or arrangement; and each drove on his way until both came to a standstill in the middle of the bridge. Like wiser folks they would fight for an advantage which a little conciliation might have arranged amicably at first; and often the results were disastrous. Some one had to retreat, and, of course, in such cases the weakest must have always had, not perhaps to go to the wall, for that would have been useless, but to the other end of the bridge, to allow the victor to pass. In speaking of this, however, my mother reminded me that when the bridge was built cart-traffic was unknown—country produce was then brought into town in sacks or "creels," fastened on the backs of horses. These travelled in long strings of from three to a dozen, each succeeding horse being fastened to the tail of his predecessor. With such a thin file of messengers there was no need for wide bridges. When my mother was young, as she has often related, if the rattle of a cart was heard on the road, all the women and children—with probably not a few of the men also—flocked to the door to see the "fairley." Carts were wonders then, though we have since become familiar with the railway train and the telegraph. At the time I refer to, the cart axles were made of wood; and a few samples of these, I am told, are still (1870) to be found in remote parts of the country. However this may be, I

distinctly recollect my father getting the first iron axle for one of his carts. He admitted that it was "rather better" than the old wooden one; but then it was "terrible dear." It may interest some of the younger generation in Aberdeen, to whom the Denburn is altogether closed from view, and some of the older generation, to whom the Denburn is but an inodorous memory, that in my mother's younger days, it was a pleasant stream running through a sylvan country. On its banks were but three houses, one a farmer's, the other two inhabited by cotters. A row of trees skirted the burn up the length of Gilcomston; and where now is the heart of the city, covered with no very cleanly houses, then there used to "come out" from Aberdeen, on Sundays, numerous young gallants to search for minnows and "banstickles," or to gather flowers on the luxurious banks of the Denburn. It was the town that polluted the stream. At its source, in the parish of Skene, there was a copious supply of pure and indeed highly prized water. Once I was quite surprised at the quantity a farmer drank of it, descanting all the while on its excellent—perhaps he would also have said, if he had avowed his belief, its medicinal qualities. It was only when you neared Aberdeen that the Denburn stunk so horribly, and became the source of fever and all manner of loathsome diseases. But it has at last been purified and buried by civilisation. May it rest in peace, and offend human nostrils no more.



Part Second—My Early Days.





MY EARLY DAYS.

IT may now be thought time I should say something about myself. I have, perhaps, played with the preliminaries of my task too long ; but my excuse must be that, if my limited known ancestry are of no interest to others, they are of some to me. I was born on the 27th February, 1798. This important event took place in a small "biggin" on a croft, at the south-east corner of the bay of Peterhead. The house was strictly in the fashion of the time—and the place, perhaps I ought to say. From two to three feet of the walls were of stone—rough, unhewn blocks, such as might be found lying on or in the ground. They owed little to the mason's skill ; for, for the most part, each crofter was his own builder, and he fitted the house to the stones, rather than the stones to the house. The remainder of the house was built of turf. Couples with cross-bars made it ready for the roof, which was heavy and unpretending—consisting of "divits" or bits of circular turf, cut from the surface of some convenient ground, by what was called a flaughter spade. The finishing touch was given to the roof by a covering or thatch of straw. There were two apartments—"a but and a ben"—with a pantry between. Such was the house in which I was born ; but, lest any one may be inclined to go in search of its venerable unhewn walls, I may state that it has long since disappeared. Neither stone nor turf, nor flaughter spade mark the place where I first saw the light, but in which I did not long remain ; for my father soon after removed to Cowhills, where the frail fell house in which we first resided was blown down in a night by a hurricane, and we had to seek temporary refuge in the larger house my father was building, before even the flooring was finished.

I was early taught to make myself useful ; for I could not have been more than six years of age when I was set to do light jobs about the farm. Occasionally, even, I was, at that rather tender age, sent to Peterhead to dispose of a cart load of peats.

It was a trying ordeal ; and those who observed me on the road, might have doubted whether the horse or I were most to be trusted in conducting this important expedition to a successful termination. Fortunately the beast always sent with me was an old one, with an experienced sense of responsibility, with good knowledge of the road, and having his own well-confirmed notions as to the dignity of slow motion. He was a respectable, shrewd carle, with fixed opinions, and all superstitions about witches and warlocks thoroughly shaken out of him. He was not likely, therefore, to be turned aside from his proper path or to see a bear in even the biggest bush. With me it was different. I was always on the look-out for enemies ; and if men appeared in the distance behind, especially if beggarly in attire, I did my best by the puny use of the whip, to push old " Smiler " (my friend the horse's peculiarly inappropriate name) forward to get beyond possible reach of what, for aught I could know, might be old Nick himself coming up to negotiate a friendship, or, what would have been worse, spirit away peats and Smiler, myself, and all. If, again, anyone appeared in front, and approaching, my terror was increased tenfold. He had to be passed somehow ; and, on such occasions, I steered to the other side of the cart, leaving Smiler to take his own course with the stranger, should he be of the intermeddling sort. Like an old general, I never omitted making sure that the way of retreat was open to myself, should it be considered necessary. This fear, however, left me when I entered Peterhead, for I was invariably kindly treated by the good folks there. My process was a simple one. I led the horse and cart from street to street until some one—generally a sonsie housewife—volunteered the stipulated price for the load. My father had two sizes of carts : for the load of one—in peats, I mean—the charge was one shilling ; for the other, one shilling and sixpence. When the peats were disposed of, Smiler and I took our homeward way : he in quiet, satisfied contemplation, looking neither to the right nor left ; I, on the contrary, generally in a state of most unquiet and undisguised terror.

This, however, was merely my first introduction to the world's struggle. If I suffered intense terror on my way to Peterhead and from it in old Smiler's company, I had at least one consolation—I had always home to return to. But of this comfort I was not long after deprived. When little, if any, over seven years of age, I was engaged to a farmer, James Shewen, in the parish of Cruden, to herd his cattle. My mother accompanied me to my new abode, about seven or eight miles from my father's house. Mother, of course, did not long remain with me ; and, after she left, I felt as if the light of life had gone from me. It was only then I knew how much I loved her. I stood in the middle of the road, gazing long and wistfully in the direction she had taken, and calculating in my own mind the

chances of reaching home, were I at once to desert my new employer. I prudently concluded that the attempt was hopeless, else James Shewen would certainly have had to look for another herd laddie. While at Cruden I was put to a dame's school, taught by Janet Kidd, a sister of my grandfather. There are no such establishments now-a-days. There were but two books used, the Shorter Catechism and the Proverbs of Solomon. On its first page the Catechism contained the alphabet, the "cat's A B C" as we called it, and some very elementary reading. These important preliminaries mastered, the young scholar was promoted to reading the Catechism. When perfect in that—with such perfection as was possible in a school so primitive—we soared into the Proverbs; and with this, so far at least as Dame Kidd could do it, our education was finished. My father went through the same extensive "course of study." In the "school" the scene was strange enough, so far as I can remember it. Janet was seldom idle. The spinning wheel went steadily, and with no little noise, while we repeated in voices as loud as we could pitch them, the muckle A, little a, bay, say, &c., the *vowel-oo* (u), the *via-oo* (v), the *dooble-oo* (w), and so on, with a breadth of sound and strength of lung little understood in these latter days. Our worthy schoolmistress wept often and copiously—why I do not know. Perhaps our stupidity annoyed her, perhaps our childish pranks made her sad. But the fact was so. She was often in tears; but she could also be stern at times, and would shake her clenched fist, or nod her head ominously—movements which, backed by the terrible tawse, were to us most awe-inspiring and impressive.

But my school experiences were not confined to the small establishment of Janet Kidd. In a year or two I was removed to Hatton of Fintray, where my uncle was a general merchant, having besides a croft. When in want of servants, he did not go into the general market; but preferred taking boy or girl from such relatives as had one or other to spare. He undertook to give them food, clothing, and education for five years. At the end of this time the boys were apprenticed to a trade; and were still kept under my uncle's eye until, as journeymen, they were launched on the world to do for themselves. As I have said I was transferred from Cruden to Hatton of Fintray to settle down for many years with my uncle, who was also my name-father, John Simpson. I was at once put to school, the teacher of which was Mr., afterwards Dr. Paterson, and for many years first minister of the Established Church of Montrose, where he died several years ago at the advanced age of ninety. I liked the school very much, and made tolerable progress, keeping the top of every class I entered. The Bible was a leading class-book; but we had, besides, Æsop's Fables and Mason's Collection. The last was a favourite with me. Many of the lessons I committed to memory, and some of these—such as the "Vision of Mirza" and "Alexander's Feast"—I never forgot. But we were also deeply imbued with the

Scripture lessons. They were certainly no task to me; and it was a customary thing for another boy and I, both having to tend cattle on the Bughtmuir, to take the New Testament with us, and read together the story of Christ's sufferings, sometimes crying over them. I recollect dating my writing copy—my first, I presume—1802, and another 1808. In those days the "writing copy," as it was called, consisted of a long sheet of paper, which we had to rule for ourselves with, not a pencil, but a slip of lead (or "lead pike"), and wrote of course with quill pens. The first steel pen I ever had was in 1825. It was made by a watchmaker, cost me one and sixpence, and was but a sorry affair after all. I suppose I might now get a gross of better pens for the same money.

Unfortunately for me, my uncle died when I had been but three years and a half with him. His age was sixty-two; and he had, as was said, been a merchant for fifty-nine years. His beginning was humble, but he seems to have been born with the commercial instinct, and prospered accordingly. He was very thrifty. When but three years of age he seems practically to have "set up for himself" as a dealer in "candle rushes." They were plentiful and easily gathered, and he "peeled" them with great diligence. It was a common employment for youngsters, and the rushes, or "wicks," were a regular and very essential article of employment. For at that time and for many years after—you will still find it in many a country cotter's house—the "cruise" was the lamp in general use in country districts. Even this, however, primitive as it seemed—for it was simply a flat iron basin, with a small projecting mouth or "stroup," filled with oil, in which the wick rested—was not always used. When no particular work was doing a split of moss fir, laid on the "ingle cheek," supplied all the light permitted in the farm kitchen, where usually the whole household assembled. My uncle hoarded the coppers received for the rushes. They grew to shillings; and he bought a hen and bred chickens, which were sold in Aberdeen. During all this process, the money store increased. The pennies became shillings, the shillings became pounds. He was advised to invest his savings in various small wares, and become pack-merchant or peddler. He did so; and prospered so well that in no long time a store became necessary to hold his purchases. The store was built; and success still attending him, he resolved on taking a wife. This may be called his next investment; and he proceeded to make in due time another. He opened a shop as village merchant, adding a five-acre croft shortly after to his accumulated responsibilities. Here he built a house which for a time was the wonder of the village. The ordinary houses had then only two apartments—a "but and a ben;" my uncle's new house had actually seven rooms, besides a portico and a peat-house. The portico was constructed with three doors, two being always shut as a protection from the wind. The house, as was duly noted, had

twenty-one doors; and just outside the portico was a pleasantly soft turf seat which seldom wanted a tenant when the weather was fine. In the central part of the house was the shop, which contained a very miscellaneous assortment of articles; for he was grocer, druggist, clothier, and crockery merchant for the village. He had his troubles. His success produced a rival, who, in trying to get a footing by underselling the established merchant, ruined himself. Another subsequently attempted to set up a shop; but both shared the same fate; they were "sold out." John Simpson was popular in the district; and, I believe, deserved his popularity. At his marriage, it was noted, there was present a party of 120; at his funeral 127. At that funeral more heartfelt sorrow was manifested than ever I witnessed at any similar ceremony during my life. As we accompanied the bier to the churchyard I counted seventeen near me weeping bitterly; and there was a deep silence over all—a rare circumstance at funerals either in country or town. No stone nor other memorial marks his grave. His wife was a "good" woman, exceedingly pious. She became a Methodist by profession. As Christians, I would say of her that she was one who said "Lord, Lord;" and of my uncle that he was a "doer of the work." He was liberal to the needy, kind to all, and had no ill to say of any one. He kept his wife in what I would call luxurious comfort as long as he lived; and at his death left her independent; but to have erected any tombstone or memorial over his grave she would have regarded as vanity and a sin; and therefore carefully avoided the temptation either to seem vain, or to commit a heinous sin.

I have been frequently told that my name was in my uncle's will; and I think this very likely, for he left something less or more to all his relatives. My father, however, did not, so far as I know, in any way interfere in the matter; and I myself, although in Aberdeen I dwelt pretty near to my aunt to the end of her days, never in any of my call which were not very frequent, mooted the subject, nor did she.

THE SOCIAL STATE OF THE COUNTY IN MY YOUTH.

Looking back upon those days of my youth, and comparing or contrasting them with those of the present time, I would say that while then most people simply crept through the world, only a portion, and not a large one, making a brisk walk of life, now folk seem to run through it, many at their utmost speed. "Man wants but little here below" was most applicable to at least Hatton of Fintray in those old days. At the present time the most distant lands contribute to supply our daily wants; and this distance is being practically yearly lessened by the extension of steamboat, railway, and telegraph systems. Then it was very different. Little came from abroad. The home fields and the kailyard attached to every house were the

chief sources of supply for the modest wants of the sturdy but frugal inhabitants of the valley. Oatmeal and barleymeal, kail, the well, and the cow, mainly furnished forth the tables of most households, at the time of which I speak. The meal and the kail were compounded in a variety of ways, most of which are now forgotten and unknown. Except at the houses of the laird and the minister—even these had not long given up “the good old custom”—all the household sat at the same table, and partook of the same fare. There were oatmeal or beanmeal porridge, kail porridge, milk porridge, and brose in extraordinary variety. We had water brose—the thinnest of all—brose and butter, treacle brose, milk brose, ale brose, beef brose—a rare dainty brose—whey brose, “neep” (turnip) brose, and another variety, the very name of which has escaped my memory. It was not in common use, but was generally made for uncle’s carrier when he arrived with goods. It was a dainty dish. The foundation of it was of coarse oatmeal, with boiling water poured over it until it had the consistence of a kind of dough. Then one or two glasses of whisky, according to the size of the “brose caup” were added; and the seasoning consisted of treacle or brown sugar. This always seemed to me the very daintiest of dainties. It was, however, a pleasant but heady dish, which our prudent elders kept for themselves on great occasions, and for exceptional guests. The Athole brose had not, in my time, penetrated to Hatton of Fintray.

Besides these we had broths of various compounds; they are called soups now-a-days, and are mere “bree” as compared with the substantial compounds to which I refer. Potatoes were known; they were cultivated to some extent; but they had not yet become “fashionable,” and were not considered by many as an article of food for decent Christian folk. They were even occasionally condemned as merely “beast’s meat.” If a new piece of ground were taken in, or a poor patch existed in a field, it was declared “good enough” to grow potatoes, but for “nae ither thing.” Potatoes were on the whole contemptuously treated then; but, like many other things and folk, they have had their revenge. Kail was then the great “fashionable” dish—I mean, of course, among the humbler portion of the community. It was made, as I have before noticed, in a variety of simple ways; and my uncle, who might be considered a man of substance in his village, insisted every night on supping on “chappit kail.” For bread we had oatcakes of various manufacture, bearmeal scones, and in some cases peasemeal cakes. Flour, or bread made from it, was rarely seen, and still more rarely used. So grand did such bread seem to me, and so unattainable, that I often fancied, if I were king, what a magnificent existence I should have, feeding ordinarily upon flourbread and milk, and on extraordinary occasions on flour-bread and cream.

Butcher-meat of any kind was as rare as flour. Indeed there were then

no butchers, properly speaking. Flesh meat could only be had once a-year, when some neighbours combined to purchase a "mairt," as it was called, which was then fed, killed, and divided among the subscribers. Nothing seems to have been paid for feeding the doomed animal. All that the subscribers paid was their share of the original purchase money, though probably the one who housed and fed the "mairt" got a somewhat larger share than the others in the division of the meat. No pigs were kept in Hatton, though nearly everybody in the place kept hens, whose eggs, however, were nearly all despatched to Aberdeen for sale.

Those were times in which the gauger, or- exciseman, had very hard, dangerous, and disagreeable work. The spirit duty was high, the thirst of the Scotch community was considerable, the purses of the masses were not well plenished, however "drouthy" their natures, and, as a consequence, an illicit supply answered to the craving demand. Whisky, upon which it was never intended to pay duty, was manufactured in abundance in the country districts. I believe there was not a house which had not its private still, and scarcely one in which whisky was not periodically manufactured, often weekly, for conveyance to the Aberdeen market. Serious risks had, of course, to be incurred; but where a whole country-side were combined against the watchfulness of the exciseman, it was difficult for that functionary to prevail. Not a week passed in Hatton of Fintray but a considerable quantity of home-made whisky was sent off to Aberdeen. Very early on Friday mornings—never later than three o'clock; generally before that time—the adventurous smugglers—not always of the male sex—started for Aberdeen, with a profuse display, in carts or in baskets on their arms, of eggs and butter; but also with a private and special cargo of whisky concealed about their persons; for the cart or basket was sure to be quickly searched by the wary excisemen, carefully posted on all the roads leading to Aberdeen on the market day. The excise officers were not usually very polite personages. Their calling forbade it probably, or their sense of duty overmastered their no doubt natural feeling of gallantry. They perhaps regarded themselves as the legitimate hunters of thieves, and treated their suspected victims as already proved guilty. Certain it is they showed little delicacy in their dealings with the apparently innocent and douse farmer bodies and their daughters or wives trudging well laden to the "toon's" market. They were convinced there was whisky about somewhere; and in endeavouring to find it out in bottle or jar in the ample folds of profuse petticoats, they gave the worthy dames and maidens of the party many a rough embrace and unloving hug. They sometimes succeeded: I fear, however, they were oftenest outwitted.

Nor did these cunning gaugers confine their unwearied researches to the highways and byeways on market days. They made raids into the very strongholds of the

enemy ; and many a most comical scene have I witnessed when this dreaded and superior person suddenly came down upon the district. But the whole village and country round were in the conspiracy ; and he was a clever gauger who could approach unobserved. The alarm was instantly given ; and the action taken was immediate and decisive. It was ingenious, too ; for the purpose was to bewilder the unfortunate government official. All lent a hand, and each seemed to know his place and plan of action. One immediately laid hold of the distilling apparatus to conceal it in a safe and distant place. He was probably one of the fleetest and strongest ; and he was careful to esconce himself in a big overcoat—such things were really big in those days—under which to hide his not light burden. Another would snatch up a big stone, and make off in an opposite direction with labouring haste, as if he were overborne by the weight and importance of his burden. Still another would shoulder a sack of malt, and run away with the genuine speed of anxious trepidation to secret it in some safe corner. But his retreat was carefully covered by a diverging body of skirmishers, who each snatched up hurriedly a bag of chaff, and made off in various directions, running, yet labouring as if under a heavy load, and anxiously looking for a hiding-place. No wonder if the exciseman was generally bewildered. It was an exceedingly rare chance for him to hit upon the real culprit, carrying off the malt or the still. He ran wildly after the nearest to him ; overtook him of course ; and after a struggle which was not all sham, the bag was dropped, and the cat let out, in the shape of a whirl of chaff which flew before the wind, and annoyed, and probably enraged, if it did not blind, the baffled exciseman. But it was no use repining. Off, therefore, he immediately bounded after another straggler, apparently more heavily laden, and breathless with hard and hasty labour. The gauger stopped him, and demanded, with the voice of authority, the instant production of what was concealed under the topcoat of the suspected runaway. “What’s that to you,” would be the first reply to the imperious command ; but the only effect was to make the gauger more suspicious, more peremptory, and probably more convinced that he had now caught the veritable culprit. Visions of a seizure, a trial, great fame to himself as a clever detective, if not more substantial reward, no doubt flitted before his mind’s eye. The altercation, however, was sure to be continued as long as possible ; for the chief object was delay ; but finally, with a sigh, and perhaps some sign of fear or contrition, the labouring wight would unbutton his coat—supposing that not to have been already forcibly done for him—and expose to the chagrined gauger’s view a huge stone, which was dropped as near to the gauger’s toes as possible, perhaps even with a fervent prayer that it might light upon them. The exciseman was again confounded. He had once more to renew the chase ; for there were several still in the field. The hunt was thus continued for a

long or short time, according to the energy and endurance of the distracted official. But in general sufficient time was thus gained to enable those who had carried away the still and the malt to hide them safely. Indeed, these worthies sometimes returned in time to be quiet and apparently unconcerned spectators of the final discomfiture of the exciseman among the chaff skirmishers and the stone harriers. After all this racing and puffing and struggling the gauger would enter the house, examine every hole and corner in it, prob beds and other covered places in his diligent and conscientious search for malt or whisky, or the implements for distilling. But, of course, by the time he entered the house these had all been carefully removed—none the less successfully and securely that it may be said to have been done under his very nose. Yet many seizures must have been made by these zealous excisemen, though I never knew of any in my own experience.

We have altered these things since then. The duty on spirits is now much less, and the temptation to illicit distillation is almost entirely taken away. But, at the time of which I speak, brewing whisky in secret, and selling it "under the rose," was considered no dishonour, no discredit, in any one. No person, except perhaps a discomfited gauger, would have thought of applying such a harsh epithet to it as "cheating" the government, or defrauding the revenue. I never heard a breath of disloyalty in Hatton of Fintray or any place else with which I was then acquainted; but while ready to toast the king, and to fight for him too, if occasion offered, the careful farmer liked his whisky strong, and liked it cheap. He had no scruples in sharing these blessings with his fellow-mortals in the town, provided they were willing to pay him for his trouble and his risk, and he showed no sinister inclination to become a "clashpyot" and inform the "gauger" upon his neighbours. But as to defrauding the revenue, a suspicion of such a thought never entered his brain. He was only, in his own view, retaining in his possession money which the government wished unfairly to filch from him and his friends. The government was good and useful, and it was right to obey it in all things lawful and expedient; but in the eyes of the farmers and cotters of my young days, the gauger neither represented law nor expediency. He was simply an enemy—a sleepless and vigilant enemy—but one whom it was all the more necessary to strain every nerve to outwit and to baffle. The most honourable, the most honest, and the most pious—and there certainly were honourable, honest, and pious folk in those days—shared in the work, partook of the risk, and were not unmindful of the profit to be gained. My uncle was both honourable and honest. He was pious, too, in a certain undemonstrative way. Yet he did not scruple to distil in secret yearly as much whisky as served for household purposes. Perhaps he might have even made enough to sell to others also, but that his "weel-gaun" business was more than sufficient to supply his wants and those of

his dependants. But my aunt was demonstratively pious, and would have frothed with indignation had she been accused of theftuous practices ; yet, I never heard her so much as fling a text of Scripture at the private still, or show the least tremour of uneasy conscientiousness when dashing the carrier's dainty brose with a glass or two of untaxed whisky.

My uncle was respected, if not beloved, of all men in Hatton of Fintray, and surrounding neighbourhood. He dealt with the public fairly and honourably ; was civil to all, and kindly as well as charitable to those who needed it. He was a man of substance ; and in many respects the leading man in the village. As such he was looked up to—perhaps to some extent courted—by the gaugers, who had generally high notions of their social respectability, and sought their friends and acquaintances, such as they had, in the country districts, among the best people they could lay hold on. But they were government officials ; and as such had to be impartial in the execution of their duty, even when friends were concerned. My uncle was usually on friendly terms with these officials—more, I verily believe, out of the fulness of his kindly and peace-loving disposition, than from any hope of bettering by the friendship, had that been possible.

Even his house, however, was searched—and of one such awful visitation I was a witness. It was a pleasant day, rather hot, when the burly, and somewhat fussy gauger, approached my uncle's modest mansion of the one-and-twenty doors. The greeting between the two was cordial and friendly. There was a dash of respect in the exciseman's demeanour, with a restrained indication now and then of that spirit of condescension proper to superior persons of government authority, and accustomed to town life and "fashionable" habits. It is a way I have ever noticed in town's people—even, and sometimes more so, in the folk of very small towns. On the other side my uncle was placidly friendly. He was never demonstrative ; but always quietly cordial, as one who meant what he said, and did not consider extra fuss necessary where plain civility only was needed. When the gauger—with some deprecatory protests, which might have been meant for apologies, that the thing was merely a formality, but must be done—proposed to search the house, my uncle betrayed no uneasiness, though he knew well there was great danger in the search. He quietly answered that of course the gauger must do his duty, and ill would it be his part to throw any obstacle in the way. He even accompanied the polite official on his search—now more polite perhaps than usual ; and himself opened twenty out of the one-and-twenty doors of the house, showing every desire to facilitate operations, and chatting agreeably all the while. The gauger peered into rooms, searched holes and corners, and poked all the beds with his probing stick, and showed every desire to do his duty conscientiously, but at the same time

as civilly as possible. But even my placid, and certainly not stupid relative, must have begun to feel somewhat troubled when approaching the last of the numerous doors; and probably he noticed, with a feeling of relief rather than of sympathetic sorrow or of friendly concern, that the gauger began to show signs of weariness. The exciseman even suggested stopping the search. He knew it was useless in this case. My uncle, however, insisted on going on with it. Had my aunt heard him at that moment she must have fainted; for though illicit distillation did not appear to be forbidden by her theology, the discovery of it would have been deep disgrace. But fortune favoured my valorous uncle. When the twentieth door had been opened, and the room explored, the tired official flatly refused to go any further. There is still, urged my uncle, another room, one "where my boy sleeps." But no; not a step further would the exciseman go; he had satisfied his conscience and exhausted his body in the fruitless search he had already made. Yet, in the room which he refused to approach—my bedroom—there lay at the time, spread on the floor, a "makin' o' maut." It was a narrow escape. My uncle showed signs of a feeling of relief from an exposure which to a man in his position would have been, to say the least, awkward; but he certainly felt no shame ~~virtually~~. He chuckled quietly as the gauger left with friendly assurances of good-will and satisfaction, but it was at the thought of the gauger having fooled himself—not at having successfully "cheated the revenue." My uncle's house was seldom afterwards searched, and he said little, except to confidential cronies, about his narrow escape.

The winter evenings seemed to me then pleasant enough. Neighbours would meet together in some "neepor's" kitchen—sometimes drouthie, sometimes dry; but aye, as it seemed to me, these meetings were as jovial and hearty as they were homely. There were jokes even, and rather smart repartee—coarse, perhaps, occasionally, but still, as much as I could understand it, with a flavour of wit, however modern wits may sneer at Scotch stolidity and dourness. There ^{etc} was somewhere in those dry quiet natures genial places which brightened with healthy laughter in those winter evenings, even when no well-plenished bottle was near. The seniors would occasionally have grave political discussions—when the only newspaper then published in Aberdeen—the *Journal*—came weekly to the merchant's shop. The war news was then exciting; and any defeats suffered by the French were most patriotically rejoiced in. Occasionally a couple would engage in a game of draughts; and sometimes the conversation among the elders of the company would take a curiously confidential and practical shape, when each would detail, not without some feeling probably of pride, or vanity, the particulars of his earthly possessions, with loving minuteness. I well remember my uncle and William Anderson, a neighbouring farmer, gravely discussing the contents of their respective wardrobes. I cannot

recall the full catalogue of particulars ; but I do remember Anderson making out that he had sixty-three shirts, while "the merchant" counted fifty-nine as belonging to him ; and both agreed in the opinion that they would probably need no more—a most likely conclusion. The number of suits of clothes possessed by each was also carefully noted ; but I forget the totals. They struck me as very considerable for "farmer bodies," who certainly had no thought of being ranked as "men of fashion."

It is more than probable, however, that these shirts and suits of clothes would not have been quite so numerous had they not been almost entirely manufactured at home. Little money was laid out directly upon them. The store increased gradually, easily, and all but imperceptibly ; and they became part of the riches of the family, to be included in the will with other gear, which went to enrich the fortunate surviving relatives. Every year a plot of ground was set apart by farmer and crofter alike for the growth of flax. It then seemed as much of a necessity as was the growth of kail, and was as regularly attended to as the distillation of whisky. When the flax was grown, it was duly pulled, steeped, and dried. It was then brought home, submitted to the brake, scutched, hackled, spun, reeled, and carried to the weaver to be woven into cloth, for shirts, and bed and table linen. With the exception of the weaving, all these operations were carried on at home. They were, for the most part, mere matters of time and convenience ; and the time was not then a question of so much importance as it is now. The scutching, the drying, the hackling of the flax, was done by the hands at the farm, at times when there was nothing else doing ; and there did not therefore seem to the prudent farmer to be any actual expenditure about it. The weaving was in great part done by cotters or crofters, who kept their beam and shuttles in the house ; and eked out the indifferent subsistence afforded by their diminutive farms by weaving when wanted for the "bigger" folks around, and weaving for themselves when none else demanded their services. The wool was likewise mostly dealt with at home. It was there teased, carded, spun, and dyed ; and then sent to the weaver to be made into cloth, suitable for man's covering, or into serge for underclothing. Itinerant tailors came round regularly, became for a time inmates of the house, and made or mended such clothing as was requisite for the time being. A portion of the wool was prepared as worsted, for socks, or long stockings, to be worn with knee breeches, being the only sort then in use.

Ghost stories and the relation of supernatural wonders then fought hard and often successfully with the gossip of the country side, in taking the chief place in the ingle nook's evening amusement. These stories were generally believed in—more especially by the feminine and youthful portion of the audience ; but the old folk

were only half doubters. They "werena aye sure about them"; but they would never have said but there "may be some truth in them." For myself the terrors with which those narratives were always so strongly spiced, took such hold on my mind, that it was many years, and after much buffeting with a very solid and unromantic world, ere I could shake the foundations of my early faith. I have seen women who were reputed to be witches, and who, as was then by many firmly believed, could assume the shapes of various animals, but especially of hares, and who when transmogrified, could be wounded by silver shot only—a piece of extravagance which, no doubt, no farmer body would then have dreamt of except for the vital chance of crippling or killing a witch. It often struck me, as a curious thing that these evil omens were so generally associated with women. Some mischievous warlocks there were believed to be male youths of the frolicsome age; but they could hardly be said to have been wicked. The vicious spirits were all in women—old and ugly, as if Old Nick had only partially lost the empire over the female mind he had gained in the garden of Eden, and could resume it when he liked as the comely damsel was lost in age and ugliness. Those stories were usually substantiated with apparent fulness. Names and dates were frequently given. We were told, for example, of such a one—living, perhaps, some twenty miles off—who had been sorely vexed and nightly annoyed by the doings of a witch. He at last had recourse to his gun, loaded it carefully, and dropped a silver sixpence in it, with possibly some secret maledictions on the "limmer" who had compelled him to resort to such extravagance. He then watched diligently, early and late; and at the grey dawn, when hares most abound, he espied one making for his yard-dyke. It was clearly the wicked cause of all his troubles. Excited though he may have been, he exerted himself to take steady aim; and firing just as the uncanny creature was taking a leap over the wall, he—joy of joys—found he had wounded it. It fell; and he stealthily approached the spot, there to find, in the words of the veracious narrator, the abominable witch, in her own proper shape and form, lying wounded, bleeding, and helpless. Even their master, Satan, seemed to forsake witches wounded in the orthodox manner. They were no longer formidable. At that time there seemed to be no difficulty in believing such absurdities. If a cat leaped or walked over a corpse it was universally believed that the first person who met the cat thereafter would become blind. My aunt affected utter incredulity in regard to such nostrums. She would at times even speak of them with something like contempt, yet, when my uncle died, the cat was carefully shut up in a barrel, while the body remained unburied—my aunt remarking that though she did not believe in the "fret," yet to run the risk might be to purchase experience too dearly. Her faith was weak there.

The credulity of the times gave rise to what is known as the Black Art Club, having its head-quarters in Banchory. It seemed for long to be one of the chief agencies of Satan for the furtherance of wickedness in this part of a harassed world. It had of course its members and its leaders ; its formula for admission, and a varying degree of proficiency among the "chosen disciples" of the "Gentleman in Black." The principal condition of membership was reputed to consist in the candidate agreeing to sell his soul to the devil, in return for which his Satanic majesty gave him certain powers over the sons and daughters of Adam's race, and over Nature's laws as well. It was a formidable compact, not quite new in the world's traditions ; but the stories of the Club's doings were the sources of great terror, trepidation, and dismay, among the ignorant at the time. The Club, however, after a season of great vigour which cast widespread alarm and nightly sweatings of mind and body around the country side, begun to dwindle. For some years it was little heard of, probably the leaders died, or became wearied of their Satanic pranks ; anyhow the Club made much less stir in the world. But between thirty and forty years ago there was a slight rescuscitation. The Club for a time enjoyed a sort of galvanic life and limited celebrity. Banchory was still its head-quarters ; and wonderful stories were circulated of potatoes flying from pots, and hitting innocent folks on the face ; of pots themselves shifting, sometimes almost flying about in an uncanny fashion ; and the dread and trepidation of years ago were beginning to be renewed, as it is easy for even a bungling magician to do where he has an increasing and ignorant audience. The newspapers now reported the doings of the Club, though very possibly some of its members were the correspondents and historians of its wonderful doings. It was a last effort, however. The Club soon after died outright, and no attempt at revival has since been made. Some years after its final extinction, I had a workman in my employment who had been a novitiate of the Black Art Club. I had mentioned the matter in his hearing ; and, as he volunteered the confession of his candidature, I endeavoured to get some information as to the inner working and conduct of the association. But he was "dreich to draw." He told me that candidates for admission had to undergo two years' probation ; that he underwent the two years' training, but courage failed him when required to undergo the ordeal for final admission to the secrets of the inner mysteries. He was very incommunicative on the subject of his training—would give me but the merest hints of the occult influences he had been taught to wield ; but he did assert that he had learned enough to enable him to prevent a cow giving milk, and that he could compel a person to dream almost anything he liked. He even gave me some hints as to how a certain class of dreams could be produced, though I have forgotten the particulars ; but, though a deil-ma-care, reckless sort of callant, his acquaintance with the exoteric

mysteries of the Club made him shy of confessions. He evidently preferred silence on that subject, and I ceased to press him.

Of the stories current in Hattan about the doings of the black art gentry, I think it will not be out of place to produce one, the one which made the most vivid impression on my mind. It will serve to show the great powers then believed to be wielded by professors of the Black Art.

THE STORY OF JOCK ALSHIONER.

Jock Alshioner (John Alexander) was a laddie in service with a farmer in the parish of Fintray. His father was dead ; and his mother lived in a very humble cot in the parish of Dyce, on the south side of the river Don. She was of necessity a frugal housewife ; but, like most Scotch women, especially in those days, she was nervously anxious that " her laddie sud gang the richt gate," and did her best by oft-repeated advice to secure this good end. His place in Fintray was the first he had had, and his careful mother accompanied him to his new home, improving the weary way with many a solemn admonition to mind his " gude words " every night ; to " sain " himself when frightened ; and, commending him to " Gude Almighty," left, with a promise that, if he heeded her admonitions, and proved a true and faithful servant and good son, to knit for him a pair of " thrummie mittens gin the cauld weather set in."

Jock, it was surmised, thought much oftener of the " thrummie mittens " than of his " gude words." He was rather a " haverel of a loon," not wicked, but joyously mischievous. When the harvest was over, and cold weather followed, with some days of raw wet, Jock thought it was high time he should have his mittens. But still they came not. Hope deferred did not make his heart sick, but made him petulant and impatient. He obtained a short leave of absence to go and personally remind his lonely mother of the promise she had made, probably altogether forgetting the conditions attached to its fulfilment. In the employment of the same farmer who had Jock as servant, was a man who was a member of the Black Art Club. Perhaps he saw signs of a possible disciple in our hero, or possibly only sought an opportunity of trying his own skill in the " dark mysteries ;" but, whatever his motive, he himself offered to accompany Jock to the water side, and to give him a message to a farmer in Dyce, living about a mile and a half from his mother's house. The offer was gladly accepted ; and the two started on what proved to Jock an adventurous, if not dangerous journey. It rained heavily when they set out, and the rain increased as they went, so that on reaching the river they found it in flood, and the ford at which pedestrians were accustomed to cross over, too deep to venture

upon. Jock was greatly vexed. His holiday seemed spoiled; his "thrummie mittens" further than ever removed from him. "I winna win o'er the water," he dolorously exclaimed to his companion, the tears rising fast, and ready, like the river, to burst their flood gates. But his companion had comfort for him, notwithstanding the bleakness of the scene and the apparent hopelessness of fording the flooded river. "Hoot, aye," was his answer to Jock's sorrowful exclamation; "gin ye can throw a stane across 't, ye'll win o'er 't yersel." Jock was an expert stone-thrower, and it was the thoughtless work of a minute to lift one and send it off on its flight across the roaring torrent of the river. But it fell short and disappeared in the flood. Jock, however, was excited and eager; his "thrummie mittens" were at stake. He quickly lifted another stone, threw it with more vigour, and seemed to see it light on the other side. But this must have been imagination; for at the same instant, he, too, dumbfounded, found himself on the other side of the water. The stone he had thrown lay beside him. Amazed, he looked around, and found himself alone. He could not see his late companion; but from the other side of the brawling stream, he heard his voice—it did not seem sepulchral—urging him forward on his journey—to make as quickly as possible for the farmer's aforesaid, where he could get his clothes dried, and himself warmed, and, if the rain continued, to remain there for the night. Jock was little given to thinking, but he did think his present adventure was very strange. Yet the facts were palpable. He was on the other side of the river—the greatest obstacle in the way of procuring his "thrummie mittens" was removed—in a most remarkable fashion; but still removed. His companion gave further proof by bawling to him from the other side. Still Jock scratched his head—his unfailing resource in bewilderment—but it brought no light nor explanation of the marvellous occurrence. He tried his legs. Fear had not yet overcome him. He could walk.

And, after a short term of confused meditation, Jock convinced himself that it was better to move forward on his way. The rain continued very heavy. He heard frequent peals of thunder; and the rain and the thunder combined to quicken his steps. In due time, weary and wet to the skin, Jock reached the house for which he had the message. He was most kindly received, was placed before a blazing fire—a double comfort to a cold and wet and weary traveller; and abundance of milk and bread was set before him for the satisfaction of his not easily satisfied appetite. When the keen edge of hunger had been so far blunted that Jock had time to look around him, he observed that the farmer had a friend with him. They were both seated on the wooden dais, engaged in a game of cards, and drinking liquor, not moderately, drawn from a little keg, which Jock "was seer wudna haud twa gills." Yet the players filled their sonsie jugs from it again and again, and the keg gave no

sign of exhaustion. It seemed very strange. Jock wondered and wondered, but could discover no explanation of the mystery. The little keg, scarcely bigger in appearance than the jug it so often replenished, still supplied the wants of the drouthie cronies. Jock looked on with a kind of fascination; but wearied limbs and a rousing fire soon brought deep sleep to his relief, if relief it could be called; for he soon after awoke, or seemed to awake. He saw, in a kind of dreamy confusion, that the two men still sat on the dais; that they still played cards; and that the same inexhaustible keg was still steadily supplying the rapidly emptied jug with strong waters. Jock was observed gazing in bewilderment by the gudeman of the house, who with kindly frankness asked if he would come and have a sail in his boat. Jock knew the locality, and had had an awsome experience of the mirk and rainy night; so he hastily declined the bland invitation. "We're ower far frae the water, an' its a coarse nicht," he stoutly replied. But "Na," answered his host; "it's a fine moonlight nicht and the sea comes to oor barnyard dyke." "The sea! The sea disna come here ava," said Jock, beginning, however, to wonder whether in his sleep he had thrown another stone, and been carried to another quarter of the globe. But the farmer pressed his invitation. "Come out and see for yersel;" and Jock, curious, and yet not without confidence of confounding his host, went out with him. Jock was amazed. There, sure enough, was a bright full moon, a cloudless sky, and the sea, smooth as a sheet of crystal, dreamily lying close to the farmyard, with a pretty boat, neater and trigger than he had ever seen or conceived, lying motionless on the fairy-like water. Jock was surely bewitched. He knew that the sea was at Aberdeen, eight miles distant. His mother's house was a mile and a half nearer that sea than he had believed this man's house to be. Yet here was the sea at his feet, and stretching far away in placid beauty, until it seemed to join with the sky in the distant horizon. Jock was dumbfounded. The little wit he ever had fled from him at that moment; and he neither accepted nor refused the renewed invitation to have a sail. He was limp and fushionless; he was put into the boat without resistance, though not without help; and both were quickly seated. It was a lonely night, cool and serene, with a beauty that was refreshing, and such as might have produced a very ecstasy of the imagination. But Jock had no great eye for beauty at the best. His "thrummie mittens" and his mother would have been far lovelier sights to him at that moment than all the splendours of that evening, backed by the luxurious fittings of the trim little boat in which he only seemed to be seated. He regarded the scene with very much the feelings that a culprit might look on the beauties of Paradise, if led through them to execution.

The boat seemed to unloose itself as soon as he was on board. The farmer seized the oars, and rowed sturdily eastward. The wee vessel glided noiselessly, the

oars seemed muffled, the sea remained unruffled by either boat or oar. There was silence over all. Out and out they went; and the further they went the swifter and more noiselessly flew the little skiff. The sea continued deadly calm; but strange and uncouth sights became visible. He seemed to see the tower of the Aberdeen Tolbooth and the sharp steeple of St. Nicholas projecting half their length out of the motionless waves. The farmer continued to pull strongly, but silently, and out the boat sped, with the swiftness and straightness of an arrow, seaward. Fear of another kind began to seize the unhappy Jock. Where would they land, or would they ever land at all? He had the ordinary dread of witches and other supernatural personages. He feared them now; and the quickening fear gave him a momentary command of speech. He ventured to break the long silence by suggesting that he had had enough of the sail, and would prefer to return. But the farmer was obstinate, whatever his purpose. It was seldom, he said, there was so fine a sea; and he would enjoy as long a sail as possible. Poor Jock was helpless. His heart sank. The cold sweat of fear came over him, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. It was an uncanny business. He began to reflect on the playing of cards he had witnessed, and the weird-like capacity of the little keg; and was fast realising to himself the dread fact that he must now be in the power of the old gentleman, whose Bible, as was popularly represented, was a pack of cards. A sudden change that had come over the heavens increased his trepidation. The clouds gathered in lowering masses, the moon was gradually obscured, the rain fell, lightning flashed and thunder roared, and Jock in an ecstasy of terror screamed so wildly that the farmer at last headed the boat homeward. But the sea was now tempest-tossed, the winds blew strong and wild; and their progress homeward was terribly slow. Worse still, strange spectres—made of lightning, as Jock averred—rushed frantically through the gloom as if to tear to pieces the boat and its occupants. Often they seemed to come in great numbers, and fought with the ferocity of no earthly—or heavenly—battalions. At times even they would come and grin horribly in Jock's face. They were evidently rude and spiteful spirits; and Jock gave himself up as a lost "loon." But further calamity was at hand. One of the oars which the farmer wielded so stoutly, and in utter heedlessness of the hobgoblins whose grinning frightened Jock to death, snapped in two. Jock was asked to take the remaining oar, while the farmer used his bonnet instead of the lost one. But the boat—certainly, in the circumstances, not unnaturally—seemed to go round in place of going forward; and they lost all idea of the direction in which they were going or should go. Then the boat began to leak, and Jock was now convinced that the spirits had done their work, and that he and his companion must needs go home with them. It was useless struggling longer. His destiny had overtaken him; the

evil spirits had him in their possession ; and Jock was ready to bid farewell to "thrummie mittens," mither, and a'. What seemed at first a greater calamity than all they had yet encountered, however, proved the salvation of the two tempest-tossed boatmen. The sea still ran very high. In this respect, indeed, it was getting worse and worse ; and, though nought else was distinctly visible in the mirky darkness of that dread night, they could both see and feel that their frail skiff, now no more a pretty thing of loveliness, was getting among the breakers, and could not long hold out. Even evil spirits did not venture where now, in a boiling sea, our heroes seemed to wait instant destruction. Their suspense, as may be imagined, was not of long duration. A huge wave, with a long thin crest of white foam, uplifted its head in the black gloom of the night from the heaving sea. It seemed to poise itself for a second as if preparing for a last grand effort, and then with a loud, hoarse roar, dashed on the little boat—surely bearing death and destruction with it. The boat was smashed ; but its occupants by some miraculous chance, were thrown on a big rock. Jock clung to it—how, he did not know ; but he was able somehow to hold on without any feeling of serious injury. The farmer, however, had disappeared—or he supposed he had ; but after a few moments, during which Jock felt sinking in a hopeless and not unjustifiable despair, he heard the sound of the gudeman's voice coming like a funeral moan through the roar of the tempest, and, in reply to Jock's fervent entreaties for help, advised him to get on the first big wave, and thus be carried nearer land. It was a novel conveyance ; but none other was at hand, and Jock ventured on the experiment. It was so far successful. Jock was carried forward with a vengeance, and in an uncommonly hurried and rude way was dashed up against another huge rock. Strange to say, though injured, his hurts were not serious, and Jock was again able, in a manner he could not understand, to cling for life to the hard and inhospitable resting-place on which the big wave, his latest conveyance, had landed him unsolicited. Jock again called to his mysterious friend the farmer, who, though apparently afar off, yet heard his cry, but the reply was too indistinct in the roar of the elements for poor Jock's disordered wits to understand. He made desperate efforts, however, to reach the spot whence the voice-sound seemed to issue ; and, to his own surprise, as it must be to the surprise of everybody who reads this veracious history, in time and after terrible struggling and suffering, he reached a low, rugged, rocky shore, where at least he could feel dry land, though himself dripping wet and half dead with fatigue. By dint of repeated halooing and howling, the farmer and he regained each other's company, and, with drenched clothes, but not, let us hope ungrateful hearts, they started in search of some human dwelling. This was a difficult business in black darkness, with a roaring wind and a pelting rain. But they succeeded sooner

than they expected in coming upon a large building. After cautious groping, they discovered a door, and knocked ; but there was no answer. Jock would have gone away in search of some other hope of shelter ; but the farmer, dispensing alike with ceremony and fear, opened the door, and both immediately found themselves in a large kitchen, a blazing fire on the hearth, and a most tempting roast of beef hung before the fire on a spit turned by machinery. Never was fortune so favourable to benighted travellers, just rescued from the very jaws of death. They warmed themselves at the fire ; and soon the farmer, undoing the roast, helped himself and Jock to a plentiful and very welcome meal. Jock, however, was somewhat alarmed at the freedom thus taken in a strange house ; but the farmer heeded not his fears, and ate as one who has a keen and healthy, and not easily satisfied appetite.

Their felicity, however, was soon rudely disturbed. The tramping of many horses approaching was heard, mingled with the rough noise of no very kindly voices. Even the farmer now took alarm. They must, he hastily concluded, have got into a robbers' den ; and they both bolted. But they were too late. The robbers were dismounting at the door, as yet unconscious that their haunt had been invaded and their roast half devoured. The farmer and his frightened companion went to room after room in search of a hiding place ; but they were like to be baffled until in a small out-of-the-way apartment, a large chest was discovered. The farmer at once raised the lid, and jumped in, inviting Jock to follow, which he did with unwonted alacrity. But really their danger, though it at first seemed over, was only beginning. They were in what seemed a sure hiding place. They might have remained there long enough undiscovered—perhaps too long for their own comfort or convenience ; but unfortunately the huge chest was half-filled with hazel-nuts ; and the farmer's greed overcame his prudence. Though they heard the robbers ranging wildly through the house, swearing terribly, and vowing awful vengeance on those who had not only discovered their retreat, but damaged their savoury supper, though life probably depended on absolute quiet, the nuts proved too strong a temptation for the still hungry farmer. He cracked them and munched them as if he had been comfortably seated on his own dais at home. Jock, in great fear and trembling, beseeched him to desist at least until the robbers had shown signs of having given up the search. His prayers were in vain. The cracking and munching went on until it attracted the attention of the now savage robbers, and led them too surely to the apartment and the chest where lay the unlucky wrecked voyagers. The lid was raised, and a wild yell of fiendish joy was uttered as the first discoverer shouted "Found." The still dripping wretches were rudely pulled from their hiding-hole ; firmly seized by several rough fellows, and dragged triumphantly to the kitchen, where the whole gang now assembled, and where still lay the vestiges of the roast

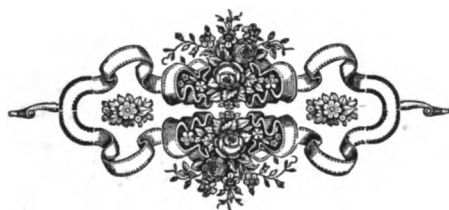
which had, to all appearance, furnished the last good supper Jock and his friend were ever likely to enjoy. For their doom was instantly pronounced. They must die. As to that no dissentient voice was raised; but, so inured were their captors to bloodthirstiness, that there was considerable discussion, and great difference of opinion, as to the nature of the death the doomed ones should die. After long debate, it was evident that unanimity on this vital point could not be secured. But an ingenious fellow among the ugly lot suddenly put it to the farmer, supposing he had been in their position, what he would have done to those who had so treated him. Jock, and any ordinary mortal who still retained any love of life, or hope for freedom, would probably have suggested some milder punishment than death, or at least would have attempted to procure some delay by temporising with the brutal monsters. Not so, however, the farmer. He answered as readily as if he had been giving instructions about farm work to his servants. "O 'deed," said he, "if ye had done sae to me, I would just hae had the spit made red het, and rammed it doon yer throats." Jock's hair stood on end as he heard this reply. Cold clammy sweat creeped through every pore of his body, and gave him a feeling as if the earth-worms were already on his skin, and preparing for their first fresh meal. The farmer's ready suggestion, however, pleased the robbers. It was unanimously approved; and, without a minute's delay, the spit was placed in the fire. It was soon red hot. Jock felt death at his heart. The "palated worms" seemed to have selected their places for the banquet, and only waited until the circulation had been stopped, and the blood was sufficiently cooled, to begin their repast. In such an awful moment it was to him an unspeakable relief to find that, when the red-hot spit was taken out of the fire, the farmer was seized first. It was a reprieve from death; and time gained, however little, was aye something. But coolness did not desert the farmer even in this extremity. "Hold!" he shouted with a loud voice, as one of the gang seized him firmly by the neck and another pointed the fiery spit at his mouth. "Hold! as I have suggested a mode of murder to which you all agree, I think it would be but right to take my man first." The brutal scoundrels, secure of their prey, at once admitted the righteousness of the plea. The farmer was temporarily released, though of course still closely watched; and Jock, already half dead with fright, felt his neck seized by a fiendish hand, held firmly as in a vice; he saw the red-hot spit raised by a savage, and felt himself involuntarily open his mouth for its reception. But with a last tremendous effort, just as he felt the approaching spit casting an intense heat on his parched lips, he gave a loud yell, or rather shriek, and awoke to find himself still stretched out in front of the farmer's gleaming fire; the two cronies still with the cards and stoups of liquor before them, and laughing immoderately.

To Jock, however, it was no laughing matter. He gasped for breath, shook his almost rigid limbs, cold, though so near to a blazing fire, and prepared for a hasty departure lest worse might befall him in a house so bewitched. He was, however, strongly, and not without kindness, pressed to remain. It was late, urged the farmer; the night was dark; and it still rained. But Jock was determined; he would go, be it ever so dark, or rained ever so heavily. "Well," said the farmer mysteriously, when he saw Jock was bent on going, "ye winna reach yer mither's hoose nor ony ither hoose, this nicht." "Nae fear o' that," said Jock, his momentary courage increased by the strength of his fearful recollections, and a great terror of a renewal of the scenes he seemed to have miraculously escaped from. "Nae fear o' that. I think I've been lang enough in an ill-pairt"—Jock, like many more in these old-fashioned times, would have considered it a grievous sin to have expressly designated the "ill pairt" to which he alluded. He bolted; and there was no pursuit. There was still a deep darkness over the earth; and he felt his way with caution until he believed he had found the right path. Then he ran with light heels and a palpitating heart. He ran on for a long time, afraid to stop, until his shortening breath compelled a slackening of his pace. It was only then that he began to remark the objects he had at first passed too hurriedly for observation. They seemed familiar; and on closer inspection, he discovered, to his horror, that he had not yet gone ten yards beyond the house he fondly imagined he had already left far behind. It loomed and frowned upon him with an ugly scowl in the black darkness. He to it again with all his might; ran as he never ran before; but still he seemed revolving in a circle. That haunt of Satan still frowned in the near darkness. Where could he be? What was he to do? He could not rest. He dared not re-enter the horrid dwelling; and yet, let him run as he would, away from it he could not get. He was fast becoming utterly exhausted. The fearful thought occurred to him that he might again be entangled in the horrible scenes and visions of the previous part of the night—scenes and visions which were frightful realities to the bewildered brain of poor Jock. At length, the dawn began slowly to break. He could discern the fatal house more distinctly, and as the grey light of morning appeared, he could see his two late friends standing at the door chatting and laughing cheerily. There seemed nothing sepulchral about them. They were not clad in winding sheets, and did not converse in hollow tones. But O! that they and all their surroundings,—except Jock himself,—could but have been sunk in the earth at that moment. He would gladly have given even his "thrummie mittens" for such a happy consummation. Shall I never be released from the influence of this pest-house? wearily asked Jock, as he still wandered—he could not now run—seeking an outlet from his enchanted prison. With the sun, however, now colouring the horizon, came liberty. The rosy

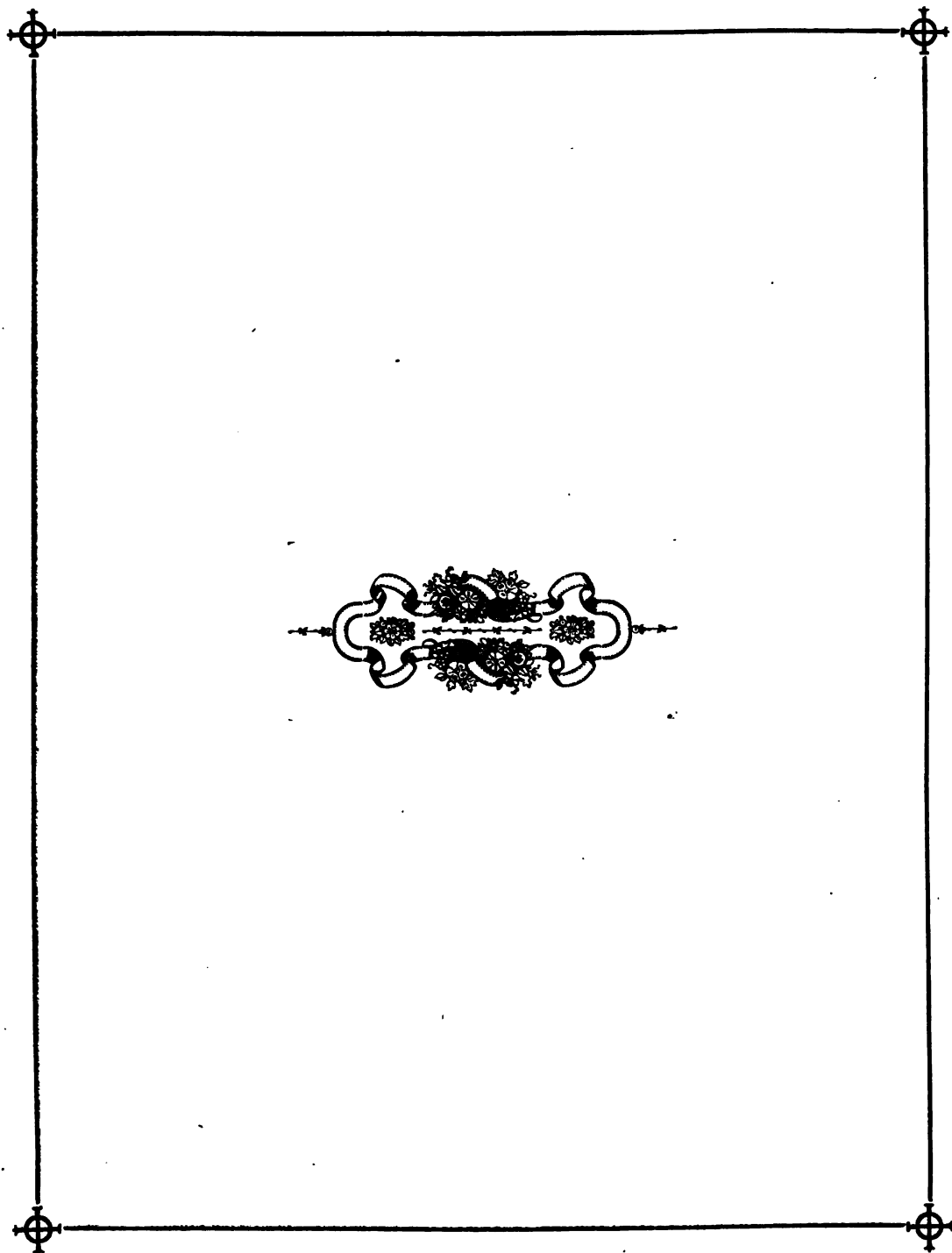
sunlight showed him the way; put mettle in his heels; and in an incredibly short time, forgetting his weariness in a mixed feeling of terror and joy, he reached his mother's cot—pale, weary, and apparently demented. His mother, poor body, was alarmed; and Jock, now feeling perfectly safe, related his extraordinary tale.

The alarmed woman was greatly moved at the recital; but, remembering her former injunctions to the thoughtless Jock, she immediately asked, "Did you sain yersel', laddie?" "No," said Jock, a glimmering of new light breaking in upon his dull brain; "no, I forgot." "Ye thochtless tawpie," rejoined the mother, with a look and tone that showed she now saw through the whole matter, "fat made ye forget fat I tauld ye sae plainly when gawn awa. Didna I tell ye that, gin ye had sained yersel', the spell wad instantly been broken, an' the Auld Chiel wad hae latten go his grip. However, this nicht's wark 'll maybe gar you min' better neist." The anxious mother was heartily sorry for what her laddie had suffered; and still more vexed, and perhaps not a little horrified, that it had been possible for the Evil One to have so long power over her ain bairn. "I aye thocht," she muttered to herself, "that that fairmer wasna canny; but little did I think he wad hae sell't himsel' to the deevil for that curs't Black Airt." Yet Jock in the midst of his recollections of recent horrors, did not forget the thrummie mittens. "Far are they?" he demanded, as soon as he had unburdened his mind and a little recovered his equanimity. "A'tweel," she replied, "I was disappointed in gettin' the richt kin' o' worsett for them, an' didna I tell ye that I wad sen' them? Ye wisna needin' to come a' this wye for them." Jock, therefore, had to return to Fintray without his warm mittens. "An' min' ye," said his still perturbed mother, "hae naething to dae wi' that chiel that cam' to the waterside wi' ye; for there can be nae doot he is anither o' the Black Airt scoon'ra's." Jock heard her, and wearily trudged his way back to Fintray, heartily wishing he had never sought a holiday.

The story of Jock Alshioner may give some idea of the popular belief in the supernatural power of the Black Art gentry. The tale was often related at the winter fireside, and vouched for as "true as gospel." Had table-rapping and table-turning been heard of in those days, I don't know what might not have happened. The simple country folks ranged round the kitchen ingle must have been driven to the conclusion that the Devil had gone mad, or that perhaps he had gained complete ascendancy on this sinful planet.



Part Third—Military Experiences.





MILITARY EXPERIENCES.

I ENLIST.

AFTER my uncle's death, I was immediately sent home to my father at Cowhills, and in process of time, I was apprenticed to a weaver. In those days the weaving was a thriving and lucrative trade. My apprentice master, for example, wrought at the loom only four days in the week, and in that time he earned £2, enough then to make him a person of some consideration. On the remaining two days of the week he disported himself with gun and fishing-rod. But this prosperity was not of long duration. My apprentice-master had to give up his gun and his fishing-rod; and wages continuing to decline, he forsook the trade altogether—only, however, as I afterwards heard, to take to the work of a day labourer, doing drudgery work for masons, or breaking stones by the roadside, as occasion might offer. He must, I daresay, have often moralised on the ups and downs of the world, when comparing his later days with his earlier—the glory of two pounds a-week, with gun and fishing-rod, and the misery of a few shillings; and these even hard to earn.

During my apprenticeship, misfortunes came thick upon my father. Ruin for a while seemed to have him in the wind. He made bad bargains; his horses and cattle died; and in a little while he was constrained to let Cowhills at a merely nominal rent and retire once more to Peterhead, where he resumed the shoemaker's stool.

Meantime, my own circumstances were far from comfortable, or seemed so to me. Perhaps I was inexcusably foolish in acting as I did; but at anyrate, I got wearied of what I considered the intolerable as well as dishonourable persecution of

my apprentice-master; and in the end resolved on running off to enlist. I have never been able to conjecture the object my master had in view; but I know this, that he did all in his power to sow dissension between my father and mother. Not succeeding by his own efforts, he sought my assistance. This I could not and would not give. It was, to say the least of it, a most uncomfortable position for a douse laddie like me to be placed in. I could not, as I would have wished, resent the pertinacious suggestions of my master to set father and mother by the ears; for I felt the force of the proverb that it is impossible to live in Rome and strive with the Pope, though even that feat has now been accomplished by the Italian King. It would have been mean and dishonourable to act upon my employer's suggestions; and thus I believed myself driven to the only remaining alternative—flight. I made my arrangements accordingly. They were, as might be supposed, few and simple. I fixed one day for my departure; but slept too long, and therefore postponed it until next day. On this occasion, I was out of bed before the sun rose, and slipped out of Peterhead unperceived. I took the road towards Aberdeen, determined to enlist with the first soldier I might meet with there, whatever regiment or department of the service he belonged to. But I judged it best to travel during the night; and therefore, when I reached Cowhills, I left the public road, and concealed myself in the extensive moor there; for discovery, it then seemed, would have undone me. It was yet early morning; but I carefully kept out of sight and hearing, far from the public road, until the shades of evening should permit me to resume my contemplated journey. For food, I had nothing but the crowberry, but plenty of that. For reading, I had the Bible, in two volumes, gilt edged—a splendid prize won at school.

At the going down of the sun I started, staff in hand, on my way to Aberdeen. I had but a few coppers in my pocket—how many I could not precisely say, but they certainly did not in all amount to sixpence. I trudged on my way, thinking a little, but still resolute. I was molested by no one, and even the darkness seemed to have no terrors for me. I was as a poor waif driven before a not boisterous wind, but still strong enough to press me onward. As I neared Ellon, I began to feel very tired; and, not having the means to pay for lodging, I lay down in a corn field to rest for a time. Soon, however, I fell into a deep sleep. But it did not last long. I awoke, excessively cold, and decidedly tired. I determined to go on to Ellon, in the hope of some kind of shelter turning up. I hesitated long, but at last mustered courage timidly to ask a night's lodging of a homely, motherly looking body. I had often known my mother, when we lived at Cowhills, give a night's lodging to a belated traveller; and I hoped now the same favour would be mine. But I was mistaken. The motherly person to whom I appealed had no desire to

give even the poorest hospitality to wanderers. She would have nothing to do with me ; and her answer to my modest entreaty was so bluntly churlish that I determined not to ask a like favour again. Exhausted as I was, I prepared to resume my way, when I observed a long line of carts laden with hay by the roadside. The horses had been unyoked, and evidently the carts were intended to remain there for the night. I conceived the thought, and soon acted upon it, of getting on the top of one of the laden carts, burying myself in the hay, and thus securing some warm rest, if not sleep. I felt sure I should awaken in time, and be far on my way before either horsemen or horses were stirring to resume their journey. But I was woefully disappointed. I fell into a deep sleep, on awakening from which I felt some motion in the cart. I thought they must be yoking their horses, after which the men would be sure to retire for a time to light their pipes ; and then I might escape. But the motion of the cart continued, and the awful truth flashed upon my mind. The carts and carters were already on the way to their destination, whatever it might be. It might be in the very opposite direction from what I was intent upon going ; it might even be that in unconscious sleep I had been carried far back towards the very town from which I had fled the day before. Desperation, however, braced my nerves. I extricated myself from the sleeping grave I had made among the hay ; and, with portions of it sticking all over me, I emerged from my hiding place like a frightened terrier, that suspects he is in a trap, and yet determines to seek some means of escape. When I was able to stand erect, I was well nigh appalled to find myself on the second of a long row of eighteen or twenty carts, probably fifteen or twenty feet from the ground, with no means of escape but to slip down the steep side of the well-packed and high load of hay. I lost no time in reflection ; but risked the descent, and fortunately reached the ground in safety. The whole body of carters crowded round me, at first with looks of amazement, as at a being dropped from the clouds ; but finding, I suppose, that I was really mortal, their faces broadened into a great grin, which ultimately burst into roars, I cannot say peals, of laughter. They enjoyed the fun immensely ; and I waited until they had in some degree recovered themselves, ere I anxiously asked what road they were going. To my intense delight I was informed they were bound for Aberdeen, and that I had got a " lift " several miles on the road I wished to go. They kindly asked me to accompany them ; but, as I was greatly refreshed by my night's slumbers, and had no particular wish at the time for company of any sort, I thanked them, left, and went on my way, rejoicing—after a fashion.

It was a pleasant enough morning for walking ; and at length I reached, without other notable incident, the fine old " Brig o' Balgownie," travelled on through Old Aberdeen, and into the Gallowgate. I had kept a sharp look-out for a red-

coated soldier, but saw none. The weather had changed. It was now dull, and rain had begun to fall. I was beginning to feel some nervous tremors, and perhaps a little darksome brooding was creeping over my mind. I, however, continued my walk down the Gallowgate; and not long after I met a soldier coming in my direction. He was, in the circumstances, a joyful sight; and I at once accosted him. "Will you list me, sir?" He looked surly, and scowled ominously upon me. "List you, you young vagabond. It would set you better to go home and mind your work. I am sure your father and mother don't know of your being here this morning." He said this, and walked on. It was a sharp rebuke, and my heart sank somewhat when I heard it; but I mustered up courage enough to reply, "Gin ye winna, anither will," and I also walked on, though my thoughts were fast becoming as gloomy as the dark, lowering clouds overhead. I sauntered on, endeavouring to extract consolation, if not courage, from the reflection, that the surly fellow who had just left me could not be the only soldier in Aberdeen, and that I must soon meet another, more willing to accept a recruit. Thus musing, I trod slowly on the very "top of the causeway," when I was somewhat startled by a sudden sharp tap on the shoulder. I turned round, and was much surprised to find the soldier who had so recently cast me off, standing beside me, looking at me intently, with a kindly expression of countenance. "Young man," he said, "if you are really determined to enlist, I may as well take you as another. Have you got any breakfast?" "I have not," I replied, and I might with truth have added that I had not the means to get one. My new friend—for such he in truth proved himself to be—was, I ascertained, named Macaulay, a sergeant in the Scotch Fusiliers. He at once conducted me to an eating-house, and ordered breakfast for me. He then rose to leave, saying, "Now, think well of what you are doing until I return." The breakfast was a very substantial one, and most welcome to me, as I had tasted nothing since the previous morning but the crowberries I pulled on the moor at Cowhills. I ate heartily, and was satisfied. I had just finished when the Sergeant re-entered the room in which I was. "Now," he at once said, "I have paid for your breakfast; and here is a shilling for you, if you take my advice, and return to your parents." "No," I bluntly but firmly replied, "I will not return." "Then come with me," said he; and he led the way to a public-house in Castle Street, into which we entered together. He sent to the Barracks for another Sergeant, and ordered in a gill of whisky for our entertainment. He again most earnestly cautioned me to weigh well what I was doing; again offered me a shilling if I would return home; and if I refused that, he would give it to me in the king's name, which would fix me for life. The advice of Sergeant Macaulay was of the most disinterested and magnanimous kind; for, in thus dissuading me from enlisting, he was insisting on

depriving himself of a gratuity of £3, which was then paid by government, as "bringing-in money" for recruits. But I was obstinate. I refused to listen to the kindly Sergeant's advice, and insisted on having my own way. He at last consented, and I was duly enlisted on the 14th of November, 1812, when I was just fourteen years and eight months old. I was at the time rather under the height for even a boy entering a grenadier regiment; but my excellent friend the Sergeant made good the deficiency by slipping a couple of soles cut from an old hat into my stockings; and thus was his gracious majesty King George III. cheated of half-an-inch of a young soldier's stature. I suppose, however, he made no particular inquiry, and therefore knew not of the deceit practised upon him. By this means, at all events, I passed for height; and left that public-house in Castle Street, Aberdeen, for the Barracks on Castle Hill, a full-blown if somewhat under-sized private of the "Royal Regiment of North British Fusiliers." By an odd accident I was entered on the regimental book as John Simpson. I had given the clerk my full name, John Simpson Kidd; but, as he was chatting with others at the time, probably he did not hear or forgot the third word. At any rate, sometime afterwards, when the roll was called, John Simpson was asked for, and John Simpson Kidd declined to answer. Hearing no response, Sergeant Macaulay, looking surprised, asked if that was not my name. Surprised, too, and beginning to doubt whether it might not be the way in the army to use only two where there were three names, I assured the Sergeant that John Simpson was my name; and as John Simpson I was ever after known while a soldier. In considering it further, I came to the conclusion that it was a most fortunate accident for me; for I had heard, with awe and trembling, that an indentured apprentice might be taken from the army, or from anywhere, if he had run away, and be compelled to serve his unexpired time in Bridewell. Soldiering seemed to me infinitely preferable to some years of apprenticeship in jail; and I was glad to be known as simple John Simpson, if it should in any way help to disguise me, and avert that dismal alternative.

I was now fairly installed in the barrack-room, and had commenced my military career. I had mainly to depend on and act for myself; but had I not, in those early days of barrack life, had the vigilant attention and advice of Sergeant Macaulay to assist me, I should have paid dearly for my first experience as a soldier. The men with whom I now associated were so smart in movement and appearance, that I soon began to feel myself a clownish lout beside them; but a young recruit was an object of much attentive consideration, especially to the older and more experienced soldiers. With them money was always scarce; and as at that time recruits received £10 of bounty, I was treated with the utmost civility. By the end of the first day in the barrack-room I had more earnest friends, tendering kindly advice,

and ready to do anything I required, than I ever after had in the army or anywhere else. Their kindness was unintermitting, and of the most effusive kind; and had it not been for the interference of Sergeant Macaulay, so sensible had I become of the many proffers of friendship made to me, that probably the last sixpence of my bounty money would have been required to express my high appreciation of the attentions of my friends. Sergeant Macaulay, however, evidently suspected what was going on, and very firmly told me what I ought to do. "Send £5, half your bounty money, to your father, young man. Draw the rest in instalments as you require it. If you draw it all now, you would not have a sixpence of it left in a week; your numerous friends would easily spend it for you." The advice was sound, and I acted upon it. I had a lad called Drummer Sandy Ross for comrade. He was younger in years than I, but older in experience and the prudence which experience teaches; an excellent companion, but full of waggishness, much of which was expended on myself. Poor fellow! he was shot dead quite near me, at the storming of Bergen-op-Zoom. He seemed to have no sorrow while living, and uttered neither sigh nor groan when dying.

IN FORT GEORGE.

I saw little of Aberdeen during this my first stay in it. Four hours' drill a day, two parades, barrack-room duties, and cleaning clothes, kept me very fully occupied, without seeking to saunter in the town. In no long time, however, the second Battalion of the Royal North British Fusiliers got the route for Fort George. The march was divided into nine days, including of course a Sunday. Marching is certainly the most exhausting of all military work. Every man has to carry his all with him; and this, with arms, as I often proved, weighed from sixty to seventy pounds. The soldier's kit is strictly limited and defined; and no book or other extra is permitted. Such things may, and have been carried by stealth; but, according to military law, it is a crime, especially when on active service. Then the tight-strapping necessary, so confines the chest that it often throws more work on the lungs than they can satisfactorily accomplish. It may seem strange to say that often, even in the open air, the soldier on the march suffers from bad ventilation; yet it is true. Those who have been on the march, say, with a thousand people, and situated in the middle or rear of that body, will, I am sure, confirm what I say, especially if the weather is warm, with little wind, or the wind a-head. After Waterloo, when so many crowned heads visited Paris to see the survivors of that important victory, the Duke of Wellington ordered many reviews of the troops in honour of his august visitors. Sometimes he would "fight his battles o'er again" in sham fights. The

largest number I ever knew present at one of these was 106,000 men. After every such display there were several deaths : it was said 6 to 14 each field day. In the course of my six years of military life, I travelled in the ranks over some three thousand miles ; and from my experience in these marches, I would say most decidedly that these deaths must all have arisen from suffocation. You cannot have ventilation in the midst of such a huge and compact body of men ; the vast number of human beings thus brought together seem to withdraw the healthy properties from the surrounding air too rapidly, and reduce the atmosphere towards, though of course not to, the condition of an exhausted receiver. I have often felt the difficulty of breathing in the midst of a large compact body of men nearly as great as in a close, ill-ventilated room.

But I am forgetting that all this time we are trudging, not altogether in a lively fashion, towards Fort George. We arrived there certainly weary as well as heavy-laden. It was my first experience of what I may call a regimental home-coming ; and I could not help contrasting it with what even I, in the humble cot at Cowhills or in Peterhead, had been accustomed to. No kind friends were there to receive us. No cheery fire was lit ; and no smoking meal scented the air with the odour so agreeable to a hungry traveller. Much the contrary indeed. We had for a considerable time to stand in the Barrack Square—"at ease," such ease, that is, as was possible with what was now felt to be an excessively heavy knapsack strapped tightly on the shoulders. We had to stand thus until the sergeants had been shown our various barrack-rooms. Then we were marched into these, and each pair of comrades were shown their berths. The rooms at Fort George were dirty and disorderly in the extreme—just as our predecessors had perhaps hurriedly left them. Our first care was to clean and in some measure tidy up the rooms. Subsequently came the orders, "attend for barrack-room utensils," "attend for bedding," "attend for cooking utensils," "attend for coal," "attend for beef," "attend for bread," "attend for candles," and so on, every separate attendance consuming what to hungry people and tired, seemed an unconscionably long time. It was a weary wait until even the means for cooking were provided ; and the process of cooking, even when begun, seemed more wearisome still. At length, however, we got our soup, and had breakfast, dinner, and tea, all in one. It was now time to retire to rest ; and, though we slept on straw beds, and shirtless, lest we should soil those troublesome frills then in use, we most of us managed to get a thoroughly good night's repose.

About five months after enlistment I was enabled, through the vigilant care of my trusty friend, Sergeant Macaulay, to send £5 to my father. I at the same time told him where I was, what I was, and all about it. This in a short time procured me a visit I had not dreamt of. As soon as my letter reached Peterhead, my

mother, accompanied by my sister Margaret, started on foot for Fort George. I had no notice of their arrival there, until a messenger announced that two women wanted me in a barrack-room not far off. I went at once to the room indicated ; but, on suddenly confronting my mother, a nervous tremor spread over me, and I fell against the wall unable to utter a word. This, however, did not last long. My mother greeted me with all a mother's kindness. There was neither reproach nor rebuke in her words or manner ; and after staying some days in Fort George, mother and sister bade me farewell, leaving my father's watch with me as a memento of their visit. They informed me, among other things, that my apprentice-master had immediately on my disappearance, sued my father for the full penalty of £10, for which he became responsible on my decamping. The case came before the sheriff, however, and he decreed the payment of only £3, on the ground that more than two-thirds of my time had been served.

Soon after our arrival at Fort George an incident occurred which very nearly raised a mutiny among the soldiers. Many regiments have pet animals which belong to the regiment, and in which the affections, if not the honour of the soldiers, are usually bound up in a singularly powerful manner. Our pet was a dog named "Soldier." He was a grave, sagacious brute. He never fought but when a soldier was near, but when inspired by the uniform, he would fight readily, and never fought but conquered, occasionally killing his antagonist. He was, in some measure, the idol as he was the wonder of the regiment ; for he came to know and to attend to many of the drum beats and bugle sounds. Any officer of sense might have easily understood that to touch such a dog would be to seriously irritate every soldier in the regiment. But we had at least one officer who was not a man of sense, though he was said to be a man of title and fortune. This was Captain Waller, a gentleman who had himself a great fancy for dogs, though not of the kind and breed of the regimental "Soldier." He had many very costly canine followers, which he looked after with sedulous care. He regarded our "Soldier" as an inplacable and dangerous enemy, and with some reason ; for, if I am not mistaken, two of his very fine dogs had already fallen victims to the relentless ferocity of "Soldier." Fort George had an excellent beach for bathing ; and three times a week the regiment was marched thither for the purpose of having a bath. On these occasions, we usually paraded at six, marched to the beach, had a swim, a plunge or a splash, according to the aquatic abilities of the soldier, and returned to Barracks at half-past seven, in excellent trim for breakfast. On one of these mornings Captain Waller was in command ; and "Soldier" as usual was of the party. None of the Captain's dogs accompanied us ; but just as the men had entered the water—no one being left on shore but Captain Waller and "Soldier"—one of the Captain's dogs, which had somehow escaped from

its keeper, paid a visit to its master at the beach. "Soldier," however, no sooner nosed him, than, looking upon him as an impertinent intruder on the regimental privacy, he took a deadly grip of the proud animal's throat. His death was certain, had not Captain Waller, incensed, drawn his sword, and with one blow, heroically cut poor "Soldier's" skull in two. The men were still in the water; but the fatal announcement, "Soldier's killed," seem to float out swiftly on the morning breeze, even to the swimmers far out at sea. They quickly returned to the shore without waiting for the usual bugle sound, gathered, an angry crowd, round "Soldier," bleeding and in the agonies of death. They debated whether they should drown him or let him die where he was. In the end he was laid in the sea.

The bugle sound was followed by a fierce groan from the men; and this was again and again repeated as we marched to Barracks. The commanding officer ordered silence, and threatened punishment; but as he was the offender, his threats only seemed to make matters worse. We were halted in the square, and dismissed. The groaning now became loud and furious; and the noise alarmed Major Cochran, who was in command of the regiment. He was extremely irritable, and on hearing the groaning in the Barrack Square, he rushed out of the room, literally dancing with excitement. "Sergeant Hay," he ran on shouting, "what's this? what's this? Captain Waller, what's the meaning of this?" All the time he was spitting incessantly, and stamping his walking stick on the ground. He received no direct answer from those he addressed; but a cry "The men's dog's killed" at last reached his ear. "The dog 'Soldier' killed! Who killed him? who killed the dog?" "Captain Waller," was the reply. "Captain Waller, what's this I hear?" shouted the Major in a kind of frenzy. The Captain began an apology or explanation with the words "upon my honour." But the Major immediately interrupted him with—"Your honour, sir; you have no honour. Your honour's in the dunghill! Adjutant (turning to that functionary)—strip Captain Waller of his sword and sash, and let him consider himself a prisoner in his room. Bugler, sound the Sergeant's call." The call was sounded; the Sergeants attended; and, having been marched to the orderly room, received a regimental order to the effect that the pioneers should kill all dogs found about the Barracks without distinction and without ransom. Then in the evening Captain Waller, whether voluntarily or at the suggestion of the commanding officer, I know not, offered £10 as compensation to any one who could claim "Soldier" as his property. No one of course did claim him. No one could do so; for he was the dog of the Regiment, not of any individual in it. But the energetic conduct of Major Cochran in the first instance, and the judicious offer of Captain Waller in the second, completely allayed the fierce spirit of grumbling, if not of revenge, which had been so generally manifested in the morning. Poor "Soldier"

was dead—had been savagely killed, as his owners considered, but they had seen the great Captain who did the deed promptly and publicly degraded ; he had afterwards tacitly acknowledged his error by an offer of compensation ; and the bruised and wounded spirits of the soldiers were thus quieted by a soothing balm which in no long time brought healing influences, and practical oblivion of the injury succeeded.

EMBARKATION FOR HOLLAND.

A stay of six months in one place is, or was, the usual rule, for a regiment, but we remained in Fort George double that time. Little occurred worthy of note. I was a zealous bather, taking to the water occasionally six times a-day, and not infrequently indulging in a plunge before sunrise, while the hoar-frost whitened the ground. But other scenes and more harassing work were preparing for us. We were ordered to make ready to sail for Holland. Immediately afterwards a regimental order was issued peremptorily warning every one to take nothing with him but the authorised necessaries. Among these, wives were included only to a limited extent. Just so many were permitted to accompany us as it was calculated might be able to do the washing of the regiment, and no more. Sixteen to the hundred was the proportion awarded ; and as we then wore frilled or ruffled shirts, the proportion of washerwomen was not a large one. We were rather in high spirits at the order for embarkation. It was understood that our work in Holland was to expel the French ; and, perhaps because the real fighting was yet far from us, our imaginations ran riot, in picturing ourselves as running like huntsmen after the French. We were troubled with no doubts or misgivings. It never occurred to any one apparently to fancy that perhaps the French might be able to hunt us. Such a notion would have been scouted as preposterous in the extreme.

The transport ships soon after arrived, and we were at once thrown into the hurry and bustle of removal. Although most of the men were in high spirits, believing they were going forth to conquer, and little troubled with thoughts of death or danger, many sad scenes were witnessed. Husbands parted from wives, with the mournful consciousness that they might never meet again ; and in many cases they never did. Families were broken up, never to be re-united ; and at times there might be observable signs of a chill feeling over all, in spite of the excitement of too bright hopes of battle and victory. The regiment was a little over 600 strong when we left Fort George. When, nine months after, we landed in England again, we drew billets for 199 men. The causes of this depletion will be explained as I go along. There were three vessels lying to convey us to Holland. I was on board the largest of the three ; and there were three hundred of us altogether in the

ship, which was an old coal-carrier, temporarily fitted up for transport purposes. We were divided into three watches, one of which was on deck while the other two were below. There was certainly no superfluous room left on board our vessel.

At length our preparations were completed. The shouting, the bugle-sounding, the clangour of arms, the loud-voiced orders of officers, the mournful wailings of parting friends, were all hushed or confined within the narrow limits of the crowded vessels. We set sail on a pleasant afternoon. We had something over five hundred miles of a voyage before us—a small business now-a-days, but then our “good” ships required thirteen days to accomplish it. But our vessels were slow sailers at best; and as the elements, soon after starting, turned *dour*, we had wind and weather all the way against us. We were joined at sea by the *Nightingale*, a war frigate, as convoy and protection. She was a splendid sailer, and darted and gambolled about us as if in derision of the lubberly hulks in which we were cooped up. It was, however, a weary, dreary voyage. I was terribly sea-sick, as were very many others. For some days we were completely becalmed, and might perhaps have pictured ourselves as on a “painted ship upon a painted ocean,” if such a poetic figure could have possibly been applicable to an ungainly tub, ugly even when motionless, and filled by a lot of most unpoetic warriors, half of them sea-sick and weary of life, looking sourly, perhaps savagely at the idly flapping sails, as they rose white-faced and weary from their recumbent positions on the deck, and, staggering to the side of the vessel, emptied the contents of their much-troubled stomachs in the untroubled sea. It was no time to think of “painted ships” or “painted oceans.” Both were to us then too stern realities; and the impatience caused by the dead calm in which we were caught was not encouraging to flights of fancy, even had there been any on board capable of indulging in them. At length a slight breeze sprang up. We moved with an unwieldy motion; but still we moved. The big, ungainly, filthy, oily sails of the old collier, swelled with the wind; and it was a satisfaction even to sick soldiers to find that we were at least now going on towards our journey’s end, however far distant that might be. The *Nightingale* did her best to amuse us, by her droll and bewildering evolutions. On New Year’s Day, she began the fun by so-firing her guns that she turned quite round apparently within the radius of her own centre. Then her yards were manned, and she flew round and about the slow-moving vessels in her charge, with all the gleeful buoyancy of young couples in a merry dance.

But it was hard for sick soldiers to take interest in these airy motions; for such they appeared. The *Nightingale* seemed propelled by Ariel, when in uncommonly good humour. But another day we had excitement of a different sort. A French man-of-war hove in sight, and appeared to bear straight down upon us. We were instantly told off in parties of six, with arms and ammunition all in readiness;

and then ordered below. The intention was, I presume, to board the big ship if she came alongside. The preparations on board the transports having been completed, the active *Nightingale* pluckily set off in the direction of the enemy—whether to throw down a challenge or simply to reconnoitre, I know not. But we were soon relieved from all apprehensions—or from the exceptional display of the courageous gallantry then closed under hatches in the three transport ships. The Frenchman was content with “sniffing the battle from afar.” He kept his distance, changed his course, and sailed away, none knew whither. To many this seemed to be no small disappointment. They entertained a sanguine hope that they would have been able to board and capture the enemy’s cruiser; and not a few growls of the bull-dog kind were heard when it was clearly ascertained that the cowardly Frenchmen had evaded the fight. For myself, I entertained no such regret. I looked upon it from the first as a very awkward business. I had never yet used a firelock; and I had no great mind to find myself for the first time actively handling it in boarding a probably well-appointed French war-frigate. I, of course without any feeling of trembling fear, concluded that the engagement, had it been forced upon us, would have been a very hazardous one. The *Nightingale*, no doubt, would have been handled with all the skill and courage which characterised her officers and crew; but to have depended on the heavy, awkward, and ungainly transport ships would have been very much as if a few dowdy dowagers had been requested to second the efforts of two well-armed knights engaged in mortal combat. We were, however, saved all further trouble or apprehension in this matter—neither the frigate that sailed away, nor any other French vessel, interfered with us more on our outward journey.

On the day following that on which the wary Frenchman looked at us and left, we were assailed by another and a different kind of danger, against which arms and ammunition were of no use. In the morning the weather had been exceptionally mild for the season. There was little wind, and where that was was favourable. We had come so near to our place of landing that guns had been fired as signals for a pilot, though none appeared. Suddenly, after mid-day, the wind increased considerably. The sea rose and tossed greatly, our miserable tubs of vessels rolling heavily with it. In an hour or so, the wind had increased to a fierce hurricane, and every minute it seemed as if our uneasy ships would go to pieces, or sink to the bottom in the arms of the much too attentive and all-embracing waves. I had never witnessed the sea in such dire commotion, and was intensely alarmed. It was especially awful, when our poor ship was in the hollow, to look up on the huge wave overhead, rolling on as if determined on crushing us underneath its unquiet weight—

“When now the foaming surges, toss’d on high,
Disclose the sands beneath, and touch the sky.”

The scene on board was deplorable. The very sailors were sick, and I repeatedly saw them vomiting as they handled the ropes. Strange to say, I was rather better than I had been; but there were few on board even tolerably well. Soon after the storm began, the soldiers—all except five or six who might be made useful in working the ship—were ordered below, and the hatches nailed down. The scene below I shall never forget—if you can call that a scene where darkness reigned. A Babylonish confusion of shouts, groans, prayers, and impious imprecations were the sole indications of what was passing; the eye could see little, though the ear could hear much. Thick clouds above, and torrents of rain, made even the deck seem dark and miserable; but the hatches were water-tight, and once down not even a ray of sunlight could have penetrated their thickness. Not a lamp, or candle or light was there from end to end of that dismal den. Some were sick and vomiting constantly; while the steady working of some three hundred pairs of human lungs made the air in the close hold foetid and sickening, almost suffocating. It was, in truth, in one sense, like unto the shadow and valley of death; but in another sense it was very different. The consciousness that every lurch of the crazy vessel might be its last, had very differing effects upon different natures. We may not see in this apparently doomed abode, but we must hear much that would be better unheard and unuttered. There is Sergeant Harper. His voice is heard above the whole roar of the place. He is drunk. He was more given to swearing than praying, to banning than blessing; and now he raises his cracking, hiccuping voice to the utmost in vomiting forth imprecations of which we must charitably suppose he knew not the meaning. Yet he was not in a bad humour. He had a canteen filled with spirits in his hand, to which, we may be sure, he frequently applied for inspiration. As the vessel had momentarily settled down after a great lurch, "There we go, boys," shouts Harper, "another of that should pitch us into Davie's locker." He had scarcely finished a chuckle at his own pleasantry, when another heave of the vessel brought another shout from the hilarious Sergeant—"Here we go, my hearties; we'll all be in hell in five minutes." But enough of the Sergeant.

In another corner sat Thomas Murphy—a man chiefly remarkable for his crass ignorance. He is in great fear. He is sure his end has come, and, after probably unsuccessfully attempting a silent prayer on his own behalf, he cried aloud—"Is nane o' ye gau to pray, boys? By dock, I think we sud a' pray." But no notice was taken of Tom's appeal. He was evidently sorely perplexed, and grunts, resembling groans, occasionally escaped him. But silence was to him intolerable, and he shouted aloud, as if praying earnestly—"O! boys, dear, have mercy on us! O! boys, dear, have mercy on us!" The prayer was short, if not very intelligible; but Tom made up for want of sense or coherence by frequent repetition. It was a long

time before he tired of appealing for mercy to the "boys, dear," whoever these may have been.

Jack Heighlands took a different view of the position of affairs. He was a man of action ; and appealed in a vigorous speech, to all his fellow-sufferers, whether they were content to be nailed in a coffin alive. If, he urged, they were on deck and at liberty, some at least would have a chance of being saved, but here in this hole there was no possible chance for any one. But no notice was taken of Jack's appeal. He waited a little while ; and then, nothing discouraged by the small heed paid to his eloquence, he called for volunteers to force the hatches. Still there was no response ; and Jack, rebellious, resolved on attempting the task alone. It was, however, a very serious matter to get across the floor. He could not even thread his way among the bodies lying there, half-dead probably with fear or sickness. Jack had literally to make stepping stones of these ; and every step he took produced what seemed a half-smothered groan or curse from poor wretches who appeared to have lost all further power or thought of resistance. But Jack persevered, and was well on towards the hatch, when, in an unlucky moment, he set his iron heel on the face of one William Dallas. William had more force latent in him than his companions on the floor ; untouched, he might have lain there quietly and unheard of ; but now being hurt, he sprang to his feet fierce as a viper, swearing horribly, and sending the adventurous Jack Heighlands to quarters where he would not have been at rest. A vigorous verbal altercation was followed by a stand-up fight. The combatants were near the wooden ladder leading out of the hold ; and I could hear that that ladder received many of the angry blows, misdirected in the deep darkness. Jack was in the end fairly cowed, and had to beat a retreat ; but there were unmistakable indications that in his backward progress he received more curses than compliments.

The night was now far advanced. The sea still roared, and the vessel pitched terribly ; but it still somehow floated. Sometime after midnight, when the sounds issuing from the distressed company were becoming less low than they had been, the vessel gave another terrible lurch on one side. This was followed by a dreadful noise, as if of the rumbling of an earthquake. There was instant silence, deep and dead-like ; and every one seemed to feel as if the end was come—some that it had come and gone, too. After about a minute's pause, one who appeared to have been groping round about him, said, in a hoarse whisper, "Is that you, Sam?" Sam at once replied—"No, by heaven ; but where am I?" There was a general and hearty laugh at Sam's perplexity. I afterwards ascertained the cause of what seemed to us an unearthly noise. An opening had been left in the temporary deck fitted on the vessel, which communicated with the lower hold. The last great lurch of the vessel

had pitched all on the upper side of the deck down through this opening to the lower hold. All must have been seriously hurt; but I forget now whether any of them were killed. This was the last dread fright we experienced on that awful night. We were left for some time after to our own not very pleasing thoughts; but even the troubles and apparent hopelessness of our position did not altogether prevent a smile now and then, at the odd fantasies, some ribald, some inspired by what seemed insane excitement, which possessed a few of the soldiers in the to all appearance certain prospect of death.

At length, however, with the grey dawn, came relief from fear of death and suffocation. The wind lowered, we no longer heard the rain rattling on the decks above us, there was a cessation of the rumbling sounds from uneasy feet as their owners stumbled from one part of the vessel to the other, battling with the angry storm; the vessel became wonderfully steady; and at last—O joyous sound!—we heard the thud of the hammers unfastening the hatches. We were free; and we issued from our charnel-house below like substantial spirits in a new resurrection. The sun had now risen; the sea presented an all but unruffled surface, and a keen frost gave a sharp brilliance to the morning sunlight. As we wandered over the deck, one looked at the other as at some strange being, or some suddenly returned friend of whose identity he was uncertain. Sergeant Harper, Jack Highlands, William Dallas, and Tom Murphy, were special objects of attention. But they all, with perhaps the exception of earnest but ignorant Tom, seemed inclined to shun observation, and to bury, if possible, at least some of the queer incidents of the night in oblivion. Tom, however, had a luminous and somewhat unctuous aspect, as if conscious that his oft-repeated appeal for mercy to the "boys, dear," had had something to do with our blessed deliverance from shipwreck.

We now learned the history of the night as known to those on deck. After a few hours' experience of the storm, we were told, the Captain gave up all hope of saving the ship or those on board. He called a council composed of those of our officers and such of the seamen as were considered worthy of consultation. To this council he frankly expressed his fears. In her present condition, he thought it impossible the ship could much longer weather the storm, and he proposed running her on shore, letting who could save themselves as best they might. Our officers, however, strongly objected to this proposal. They pointed out that the coast was shallow, and that the ship must ground so far from the shore that it was impossible, especially looking to the tempestuous condition of the sea, that any one on board could be saved. It was further urged that the ship was already in shallow water, having twice struck bottom during the night, and that it would be better to weigh anchor or cut the cable, so that the ship might be carried out by the wind to deeper and somewhat

less troubled waters. This suggestion was acted upon. The cable was cut, or rather it snapped just as they were about to cut it, so chafed was it by the tossing of the vessel. We thus drifted out to sea ; and in an hour or two after, the calm came that saved us and set us at liberty.

Our course was now directed towards Hollands Diep, an inlet on the coast of Holland, at, or, it may be said, forming one of the mouths of, the Rhine. A pilot came on board, and guided us to Williamstadt, where we disembarked.

We landed in the "gloamin'." It was bitterly cold ; and, while waiting for instructions as to our destination for the night, there was much shivering and chattering of teeth among us. While thus waiting and shivering I went up to a fruit-seller—a Frauw somebody—and asked in my plainest English—or Scotch—for a pennyworth of fruit, tendering an English shilling in payment. I got quite a hatful of fruit and a handful of change. I thought there was rather too much of the latter ; and, holding it out in my open hand, I suggested, still in English, that she had given too much money in exchange. She evidently thought I was complaining of my bargain, and, giving me another apple, motioned me away, speaking Dutch in a somewhat surly tone. My change consisted of a swarm of small coin, base silver and copper, but when I went to make a purchase with them, I found that, after all, my change from the fruit-dealer was certainly not too much. When I returned to the landing stage, I found that orders had been given for the distribution of a glass of rum per man. In a night so intensely cold, the spirit would no doubt have been beneficial ; but I had a great repugnance to such things ; and, though urgently pressed by several commissioned and non-commissioned officers, I refused to touch the proffered glass of rum.

We were marched from the market-place of Williamstadt to a farm-house at some distance from the town, and here we were shown into a large barn, with plenty of straw, which had to serve us as blankets and sheets. Here I made my first acquisition in Dutch. I had almost buried myself among the straw, when I heard the "bos" (the farmer himself, or goodman) shouting what sounded to me like "Noch mehr stroy." "Mair," I reflected, was a good Scotch word, and "stroy" did not seem to be far removed from straw, so I jumped up, shouting "Yes" in reply to the query, and was rewarded with two additional bundles of straw. I was pleased in believing that I could now put the question "Any more straw?" in Dutch, and fell sound asleep in thinking of it.

It was still bitterly cold and frosty when the bugle sounded in the morning. There were no preparations for matutinal ablutions in that straw-covered barn ; and, to tell the truth, I think there was little desire among us for extensive contact with water, when we had felt the keen sharpness of the freezing air. Those with beards

were in what might be called a dirty predicament ; they could not shave : boys without them had no difficulty ; they rose and shook themselves, pleased that this was all the toilet necessary in such weather. We commenced our march early. Our destination was Tholen, a fortified town between three and four miles distant from Bergen-op-Zoom ; and at Bergen-op-Zoom we were expected to win our spurs. As long as we were in motion, we of course felt no grievous discomfort from the sharp frost ; but we had a canal to cross in the course of our journey ; and as it had to be crossed in boats, the delay caused greater bitterness of suffering than ever I felt before or have since. We were half-frozen as it was, and it seemed as if a very short prolongation of our stay on the banks of that weary canal, would have encased us in icicles. But we escaped. We were all at last conveyed safely across ; and were enabled to keep our blood warm until we reached Steenberg, where we halted for the night. Patrick Shannon and I had the good fortune to be quartered in a most comfortable cottage, with agreeable, kindly folks, who listened gravely while my companion became eloquent in English, just as if they understood every word he said. I was not thirsty at the time ; but as soon as we entered the house, by way of opening communications, I made signs for a drink. A smart little girl at once procured a bowl, and, dipping it in a pot hanging over the fire, presented it to me steaming hot. Had I really been thirsty, this would have been a woeful disappointment. As it was, I forced myself to drink a little, and hand back the pitcher with the best grace I could. I subsequently learned that the water in Holland was generally so stagnant and bad, that boiling it before drinking was considered a necessary precaution. It seemed to me, however, that they might at least have let it cool again before offering it to a thirsty soul.

When comfortably seated at the tidy fireside—all the firesides are clean and tidy in Holland—my comrade, Patrick Shannon, whose mind was still running on the terrible perils of the deep from which we had so recently escaped, at once commenced a very animated, full, and detailed account of the storm and our sufferings, to the people of the household. I more than once suggested to him that he was wasting his eloquence, as they could scarcely be expected to understand his English any more than he understood their Dutch. But Pat was of a different opinion. He was certain they understood him well enough ; but “sure, nobody could understand them if they always spoke in the way he had heard them.” So he continued his voluble story of the night’s dangers we had escaped ; and the good folk good-naturedly kept up the appearance of marked attention to Paddy’s animated, if somewhat rambling narrative. They proved excellent listeners. But all the while the “womankind” showed themselves busy cooks ; they were engaged in preparing a sumptuous supper, and I watched their motions with hungry interest. Shannon had got into the habit

of saying, "Yes, yes," whenever he was addressed by any of the family; and when taking our places at the supper table, this unlucky readiness in reply was like to deprive us of bread. "Noch brood en ta sac," inquired our host, or something like that. Shannon was at once ready with "Yes, yes;" but I had already learned what *noch* meant; *brood* was uncommonly like "bread," and *sac* I interpreted or guessed to be "sack," so that when Shannon shouted "Yes, yes," I still more emphatically roared "No, no," and, that there might be no mistake, I brought forward my haversack, and turned it inside out, to show there was nothing there. They all laughed heartily at this kind of plain and intelligible speech. We had an excellent supper, and enjoyed it.

Besides the keen frost, many peculiarities of Holland struck me as we trudged on our march towards Tholen. The country lay low and flat—a long extended plain—as compared with the hilly Scotland I had so lately left. It was intersected in an extraordinary manner with canals. At every house there seemed to be at least one windmill, and on a windy day, it was a rather animated sight to witness every one of these many windmills whirling with an earnest, creaking determination, as if engaged in a competitive examination as to speed. At times a great windmill, of maturer size than his neighbours, suddenly ceased the whirl, and then moved slowly as if cogitating whether it was consistent with his dignity to run at such a break neck pace; but again the fit and the wind would seize him, and off he set at a mad-cap velocity utterly subversive of respectability and dignity. It was impossible then to distinguish him from the tiniest and most foolish juveniles in the family of windmills. These were the principal motive power for the farmer as well as the tradesman. The canals were all navigable; and in the summer it seemed odd to see vessels moving noiselessly along among corn-fields, by thick woods, and past snug houses, as if making a friendly call; for the water was imperceptible at a little distance. The flatness of the country was often tantalising, and even depressing, to soldiers on the march. At times, where woods did not intervene, we might, almost on starting, descry the pointed steeple, or even the tops of the houses of the place which was to be our destination at night. It seemed no great distance off; but it was a weary time ere we could reach it; and seeing it for so long, made the march appear all the longer and more toilsome. It is not always good to see too far before you. I have found longer marches in a hilly country less wearisome than those in flat, homely, and cleanly Holland. The soil is almost wholly alluvial; and, as a consequence, no stones were available for the pranks of mischievous boys, if any such there were in Holland. Nor did there seem to be any stones for building purposes either. The process of running up a labourer's cottage was extremely simple. The carpenter first prepared a stout frame of wood, the size and shape of the house desired. This

frame was put in position ; and the bricklayer then built a gable, sometimes merely a chimney stalk, at the end where the fire was to be placed. The openings in the wooden frame were then filled in with clay ; and the outer walls of the modest mansion were complete—provision, of course, having been made for windows and a door.

The Dutch, if not born skaters, are compelled to learn it early. In the winter time it is their chief means of locomotion ; and, as the winter of 1814 was exceptionally severe, even for Holland, I had ample opportunities for watching the motions of the "Flying Dutchman," at the only time when he makes the most distant approach to flying—on the ice. This was a very common method of conveying country produce ; and I especially delighted in watching the graceful motions of the Dutch girls—even these seemed graceful on the ice—as they moved swiftly along as if impelled by the wind or unseen wings, with basket or milk-jar on their arms, always pulling up suddenly and skilfully at the places to which their errands took them. It was, too, an exhilarating and pleasing sight to witness the intricate evolutions a party of skaters could go through on the ice. The canals froze quickly. They were all more or less affected by the tide. At low water they were, as it seemed instantaneously, congealed into a sheet of ice ; and this was quickly broken up as the tide began to rise. But again, as soon as the waters rose to their full height, the icy fingers crept swiftly over them, and they were solidified until the receding tide again broke and destroyed the thick crust. When I was there, it was no uncommon thing for a boat to be frozen up in mid-stream as the boatmen rowed it across.

The Dutch are known as a very cleanly people ; and they show forth their cleanliness. Look into a Dutchman's kitchen, and you will see nothing but bright polish. The metal utensils hung on the walls might do for mirrors, so clear and clean are they. But there are hypocrites even in Holland ; and maid-servants who only make a show of cleanliness. Occasionally, if you look at the sides of those bright-looking pots and pans next the wall, you will find the unexposed parts very black and dirty. The matter was forced on my observation more than once ; for I was often an attentive and interested observer of cooking operations in Dutch kitchens. In even the humblest houses in Holland, there is a great display of crockery ware, with the appearance occasionally as if you had entered the place of business of an incipient stoneware merchant. Frequently the inside walls of the houses are finished with Dutch or Delft tiles, on each of which is a picture. In one little mansion where I resided for sometime every wall was so covered, the pictures being composed of scenes from the Bible.

All this time we must be supposed to have been continuing our march to Tholen, a fortified town of some two thousand inhabitants. It was the chief place of what

was known as the Island of Tholen. On arriving there we were at once put on garrison duty; and we had to keep a very sharp look-out; for the so-called impregnable fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom was only about three and a half miles distant; and it was occupied by the French, whom we were in hopes of expelling. I now mounted guard for the first time, and for the first time stood sentry. I was, and had been, rather uncomfortably placed in the regiment. When I first enlisted, my superiors seemed to think there was too much of the boy about me to make me an ordinary soldier at once. I was, therefore, handed over to the bandmaster, to see if he could make a musician of me; and, after failing at the clarionet through the smallness of my little finger, I was consigned to the German flute. But, though I had no particular disinclination to learning to play the flute, I regarded my position in the band as in some way degrading. Bandsmen are relieved of many of the irksome duties of the rank and file. They never mount guard; and thus have every night in bed—a privilege greatly envied by the “duty men,” as the working soldiers are called, and these reviled the bandsmen because they enjoyed it. They relieved themselves somewhat by denominating us “diverting vagabonds.” The drummers and fifers, who had also every night in bed, and had besides the disagreeable duty of applying the “cat” when that punishment was ordered, were still more coarsely abused: they were called “scab-raisers.” While in Scotland, therefore, I found myself, as a member of the band, to some extent contemned by the other soldiers. When we went to Holland, my position became even worse; for having gone there to hunt the French, even a boy had to pass for a man and a full soldier. We had to make all the face we possibly could; and so I, with several others, was taken out of the band, and supplied with a fuzee, or small firelock. But though thus dangerously promoted, I had still to wear my band uniform; and those who did not know of my promotion, still, of course, treated me as the inferior being they considered a bandsman. The consequence was, that I often suffered more bitter indignities than being even scorned as a “diverting vagabond.” I had all the work of a “duty-man,” and was yet treated with the kind of contemptuous bitterness usually bestowed on members of the band. Once, for example, we were being ferried across the Merk. It was very cold; and on gaining the other side, we were directed to a kind of ruinous hut, in which, however, there was a blazing fire, with seats set round it. On entering, we found the men who crossed in the first boat “in occupation.” But I pressed forward, and just managed to squeeze myself so far in between two of the men, that I could feel the blessed influence of the fire on my half-frozen hands. The others, however, still stood behind, looking “blue,” wistfully eyeing the fire, and, I suppose, feeling some envy of the position occupied by their more fortunate comrades. One officer who occupied a seat in the fortunate circle, suggested that those

who had been longest at the fire should retire, and leave room for the new-comers. He did not, however, himself set the example, and no one stirred. Then, turning his eyes on me, this very considerate officer shouted—"Get up, you bandboy, and let some of the men take your place." It was cruel. I was no bandboy now, and had not been two minutes at the fire. But I had to retire, and did so indignant and sulky, though silent.

The bandsman's coat, however, was no bar to my mounting guard at Tholen. We had, as I have said, to keep a sharp look-out. Sentries were placed at proper distances all round the ramparts; and to ensure the unremitting vigilance of these sentinels, visiting rounds, as they were called, dropped down upon the sentries at uncertain times. These visiting rounds consisted of a captain, one or two subaltern officers, and a sergeant. I kept steadily at my post; and was all alert for the first visitation. I wished to look as much of a soldier as possible now that I was at really soldier's duty. As soon as I heard the muffled tramp of feet on the snow, I challenged, "Who goes there?" "Rounds." "Stand fast, Rounds; advance one, and give the countersign." The sergeant advanced, and gave the countersign at the point of my diminutive bayonet. Having received the parole from me, he retired; and I called out, "Advance, visiting rounds. All's well." In saluting, however, when the party came near, I faced inwards instead of outwards. The captain immediately came to me, and asked me to what regiment I belonged. I told him. "You are," he said, "a very young soldier; but you must observe always to face outward, or to that point of your post which is your special charge." I did not forget the injunction; for I felt anxious to be a good soldier, and washed from the stains of a bandsman, if I could only have got rid of the band coat and "facings."

This same night was distinguished by a very unfortunate incident which led to my first witnessing a flogging. In several places the houses of the inhabitants were built very close to the fort—so near that it was easy to hand anything from the windows opposite to one on the ramparts. It was, as usual, extremely cold; and out of kindness certainly, though a dangerous kindness for its recipients, a commiserating matron handed me a bottle of gin to take as much of its contents as I chose. I drank very sparingly, and returned the bottle to the kindly frauw with a keen sense of gratitude for her attentive consideration. She then handed the bottle to the sentry on the next post, not far off. He was a Scotch lad, about a year and a half older than myself. He bore an excellent character, and was a favourite among his comrades. Probably he was ignorant of the strength of the liquor offered him, and did not reflect that he might have too much even of a good thing. He had, at all events, taken too much, and when the "rounds" visited him, he was helplessly drunk in his box. The case was of course reported. A court-martial was

held ; and, the proof being clear, the poor fellow was sentenced to receive three hundred lashes. It was horrible. His youth and good character powerfully pleaded for him ; and in different circumstances might not have pleaded in vain ; but in our then situation the crime was regarded as very heinous ; for the negligence of which he had been guilty might have lost us Tholen and endangered the lives of the whole garrison. By old hands indeed the sentence was spoken of as comparatively lenient : he might have been condemned to death ; and, looking to the sequel, death might have been preferable. He would have suffered less. Well, the unfortunate lad was tied to the triangles, and received two hundred lashes : a hundred were remitted. He was then taken to hospital, there to undergo the further and, as I have heard experienced soldiers say, the more horrible torture, of healing his lacerated back. What his sufferings may have been he never told. He came out of hospital a completely altered man. For a time he hung his head in shame ; but gradually, from being an innocent, harmless, loveable youth, he changed to a reckless, drunken, thoroughly demoralised scapegrace. His punishment may have done some good as a terrible warning to others ; but to him it was moral ruin. To the hardened villain, the garotter or the brutal wife beater, the lash may act admirably as a deterrent, and probably can do little moral harm where there is so little morality, sense, or feeling to operate upon ; but on the young, inexperienced soldier, or even to the old and experienced, if of honest, upright character, its effect is in the main degrading ; and I am glad that a repetition of such scenes as I witnessed at Tholen and other places, have, by humane legislation, been rendered impossible.

Soon after our arrival at Tholen, a number of our best men were picked, and sent to take Antwerp, if they could. I, though a mature youngster of fifteen, and handling my fuzee still with a little hesitation, was not included among the picked men. I cannot say I regretted the exclusion. Antwerp was a remarkably strong place, mounting, it was said, seven hundred guns, and otherwise thoroughly well organised for defence. It was surrounded partly by a ditch and partly by the River Scheldt ; the width of the former about ninety feet, and of the river about four hundred. Of course the water froze quickly. The ice was carefully broken up in the early part of every day ; but at night our men in their sallies could generally run safely across, though occasionally there was a break, which caused the drowning of some. Great wood fires were lit behind the artillery, in order to temper, if possible, the biting cold. The bombardment was, of course, carried on with great vigour and determination. Many were killed, many were wounded, but these were the only results of the bombardment, so far as I then heard.

THE ATTACK ON BERGEN-OP-ZOOM.

At Tholen we had been gradually extending our outposts towards Bergen-op-Zoom; and in two months' time the sentries of the opposing armies might easily have held a friendly conversation, or, with still greater ease, have shot one another. And this happened, it is said, in more than one instance. The difference of language would, of course, have been a serious bar to conversation, and might probably have caused misunderstandings. But there was no misunderstanding a leaden bullet: it required no translator.

We were soon to attack Bergen-op-Zoom. Of course the men knew nothing officially of the plan of attack; but the rumour current among us was this. Colonel Carleton had obtained leave to command the storming force. As one very important qualification for this onerous post, he had, disguised as a native fruit-seller, gained access to the interior of Bergen-op-Zoom; and once in, he took care not to come out again, until he had observed, with more or less care, every nook and corner about it, as well as the general disposition of the garrison. It need hardly be said that Colonel Carleton was possessed of great coolness and courage. He had been through the Peninsular war with the Duke of Wellington; and at the various engagements there had been so often wounded about the face and neck that his appearance was anything but comely. The night fixed for the attack was the 8th of March, when there would be no moon, and thus our approach might not be observed. Operations were to begin about one o'clock in the morning, when it was presumed all in the fort, except the guards, would be in bed. The object was to surprise and slay the guards, and take possession of the fort before the garrison could be aware of our presence. Such was the general rumour of the plan of operations; how it was carried out will presently appear.

I mounted my first picquet on the 8th of March. It consisted of one captain, one subaltern, two sergeants, one drummer, and forty rank and file. Our quarters were in an out-house at a farm-steading. In the course of the forenoon we had been served with two days' provisions; and, for cooking purposes, were divided into parties or messes of six. There was but one fire in the place, and the only utensil available for cooking was a moderate-sized pot. It was thus necessary to draw lots for the use of fire and pot; and I unfortunately was in the mess that drew the last lot, and therefore was the last to have dinner cooked. It was long after dark before it came to our turn. We, however, set to with an energetic will. On foreign service a soldier's rations were a pound of beef and a pound of bread. If more was considered desirable, we had to find it as best we could. On the present occasion, we had procured some excellent potatoes; and I'm afraid

I must confess they were not procured by purchase. They were now, however, in the pot; and we awaited the completion of the slow process of boiling with hungry impatience. It had proceeded so far that we could feel the pleasant odour rising from the pot, the centre point of our observation, and we felt a corresponding increase in the pleasures of anticipation. A few minutes, and we should have been enjoying our dinner, when, hark, the cry of "Guard turn out" fell like doom on our ears. It was no pleasant sound to six hungry men, who almost "felt the bit in their mouths;" but the call was peremptory. We turned out at once with the others; and on being formed in order outside, I could just discern through the darkness, a stranger in earnest conversation with our officers. They spoke in whispers for a few minutes. Then our firelocks were carefully examined. We were "turned in" to put on our knapsacks. This done, we were again turned out, the savoury pot still boiling and emitting a more enticing flavour than ever. Our fittings were now examined; and again we were turned in to put off our knapsacks. This was the last sight or smell of the boiling pot we had. On going out again, we were at once formed and marched off without either dinner or knapsack. The strictest silence was enjoined. We had not the slightest notion of where we were marching, or what we had to do; but we had not gone far when a countersign and parole were imparted to us. This, thought and whispered the old soldiers of the party, means the spilling of blood soon. I pondered seriously, perhaps gloomily. What should I do? I had never yet seen fire. How shall I behave now? I had heard much boasting of deeds of daring done by the men; and one old soldier who was conspicuous by the volubility with which he talked of his former exploits, I determined to keep in view, and to follow in all his movements. Thus, mused I, not at first without some nervous tremours, I may be able thoroughly to perform my duty as a soldier in this expedition.

We marched on in silence, and, as the snow was deep on the ground, the tread of our feet as we marched was scarcely audible. As we walked along I stepped suddenly on something that was *not* snow. I looked down and found I had trodden on the half-bare body of a poor fellow lying prone on his face. He was dead, it was evident, but how he came to be there I could not imagine. The incident, however, had a peculiar effect upon myself. Notwithstanding my previous cogitations, and my resolution to follow in the footsteps of him whom I thought the bravest soldier, the unmistakable sensation of fear had visibly increased the action of the heart. My forebodings were becoming gloomy in the extreme; but after I had unwittingly stepped on the body of that poor dead soldier, my fears and misgivings vanished. I seemed to hear a voice saying

"Thou shalt not need to be afraid
For terrors of this night;"

and I continued the march with more firmness and confidence than I had felt since we started. Soon after we heard shots, and the effect upon every one around me seemed electric. Nothing was said, and we still marched on; but there was a different movement and expression of countenance among the men, that seemed to me the result of hardening determination. How far we may have marched in this silent tension of mind and body I know not; but I have a very distinct recollection of coming to the bank of a stream thick with slush and large angular pieces of ice, rushing past with the velocity and force of a mountain torrent. This was unusual; but we soon understood that the garrison sluices had been opened and the ice broken, the waters rushing out with unwonted speed. We paused on the bank, looked up and down the stream, but no bridge was near. We had therefore to cross without one; for our work lay on the other side. I still kept him whom I had silently chosen as my Mentor in view; but he did not long remain so. He slunk to the rear, and disappeared in the darkness, having remained just long enough to remember what like the stream looked, so that he might describe it when next he enlivened the barrack-room with eloquent stories of his heroic exploits. I never saw him again. "Oft boasting hides a coward's heart" seemed perfectly true of cautious Waddell, on whom I had pinned my faith. I looked after him for a moment, and then faced the flood in front, on whose surface now the heads and shoulders of my comrades appeared to float as they pushed on to the other side. I dashed in, too, and got over sooner than I expected. In crossing, I had made use of my firelock as a kind of staff, and I began to fear that now, being wet, it might not go off. This would have been dreadful; and I took the first opportunity of testing its powers. It went off beautifully; and I felt great joy in consequence. It was my first shot.

We were now on the opposite bank, and in front of the famous fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom. Immediately on landing we were ordered to lie flat on the ground to save us from the fire of a battery of great guns from the fort which seemed particularly attentive to our party. But it did little harm. We were too near the wall. A party with small arms, however, were also specially watchful of our movements; and they fired with much more effect. The night was pitch dark; but every now and then lights were shot up from the fort, so that they might distinguish our whereabouts. The situation was certainly very far from comfortable. The water in crossing the canal had come up to my arm-pits. My clothes were wet through, and, in this condition, to make my bed on the soft cold snow, suggested dreamy thoughts of a now apparently far-off time when my bed was wont to be carefully arranged, and myself warmly "happit" in it by a loving mother. But it was no time for dreaming or repining. We were in for it; and the excitement of present

danger effectually banished all languishing thoughts. I soon made intimate acquaintance with death. The drummer attached to our picquet was a pleasant jolly companion of mine, about my own age, or rather under. He was a bonnie laddie, and a great wag. But his pleasantries were now terminated. He had manfully crossed the stream with the rest of us ; had lain down, perhaps without waiting the order to do so ; and, poor fellow, possibly with a childish notion of protection, he had fixed his drum endways in front of his head. He had not, however, been many minutes in this position when a shot went right through the drum, and lodged in his brain. He died instantly ; and there was no one to tend him. The booming of the great guns continued, the lights shot up unintermittently, and the whiz of the small shot from the ramparts seemed now continuous, while again and again the gloom was pierced by shrill cries for assistance from those who had sunk in the soft mud of that melancholy ditch we had just crossed. The captain of our picquet was very nearly drowned. He cried for help often and long without the slightest attention being paid to his shouts. Ultimately, however, one of our men rose silently from his bed of snow, and, plunging into the stream far enough to enable him to reach the captain with his rifle, assisted him safely to land. Others may in like manner have been saved ; but I heard it estimated that some 750 men were lost in the dismal water that night.

We lay long on our cold bed. The soft snow had become hard by our continuous pressure. Our wet clothes had almost stiffened with the frost ; and even the involuntary movement we occasionally made in an attempt to keep up circulation was dangerous. The lights were still flashing, the guns roaring, and the firelocks whizzing on their deadly course amongst us. We were thoroughly wet, cold, comfortless, and hungry—those few, at least, among us— for our picquet were far from being the only occupants of the snowy bench—who had left our savoury dinner boiling in the barn. At length our Captain Darrah suddenly leapt to his feet, exclaiming, “Is there any one here commanding ?” There was no reply ; and he went on : “I think we should not lie here inactive. There is much to do, and we should have a share of the work.” Now an angry voice was heard, shouting sharply in an imperious tone, “Silence, sir ; there is one here to command you to lie down and keep quiet.” The captain lay down and kept quiet, as we all did ; though I was very much of our officer’s opinion, that any kind of activity, a hand to hand encounter with the enemy even, would have been better than lying motionless on the cold ground in a night of intense frost. Undoubtedly there was some important purpose in this inactivity ; doubtless something of consequence was going on at the fort of which we were totally ignorant, though probably the imperious gentleman in command was aware of Colonel Carleton’s plans, and waited perhaps

only for some preconcerted signal to act. Whether that signal was ever given I know not ; but at length we were roused by a sharp call for volunteers to break or cut down a drawbridge. Michael Dugan, not far from me, at once started to his feet, shouting "Here's one, by —— ;" and in a very short time so many followed Dugan's example that the necessary number was at once filled up. I found myself among that number. We were quickly marshalled, and marched into the town, where, in the deep darkness of the night, little was to be seen, but much to be heard, with the strong smell of burned gunpowder pervading all. Just as we were crossing the drawbridge leading into the town, I observed what at first seemed an apparition, in white, appear on the rampart close by. It showed amazing agility and courage, for it at once dropped from the high rampart to the ground beneath, and fled, soon vanishing in the darkness. I had time to see, however, that it was no sepulchral apparition, but the substantial body of a poor gentleman who had had a rude awakening that night, and had in his terror fled without even venturing to don his trousers. The great quantity of soft snow gathered at the foot of the ramparts saved him from mutilation ; but, unless he knew of some safe and warm shelter near, his life would have been more safe inside his own house than it could possibly have been outside, devoid of all clothing, except a thin shirt. Many in Bergen must have been shaken by the same terrors that night, though they did not take the same means of escaping from them. We crossed the drawbridge, and entered the fortress, where Death seemed to be disposing of his victims by the hundred. It was the very carnival of the King of Terrors.

Ungovernable confusion seemed to reign in the fortress. There were shouting and roaring, oaths both loud and deep coming from all sides in French and English ; there were the groans and moans of the wounded and dying, and the shrieks of the terror-stricken, more helpless still. We seemed to act as in a dream. We were marched to one place, stood there firing away at what might have been taken for a phantom row of opposing soldiers, but that they returned our fire with effect ; and the reality of the work was uncomfortably proved by near comrades dropping down here and there wounded or dead ; there was no time nor inclination to inquire which. But we obeyed orders, and fired steadily in the one direction, until our weird-like opponents vanished, or our commander deemed it prudent to shift our position to some other spot in the gaunt darkness, now only fitfully lit up here and there by the flashes of the banging firelocks. Again, we would have to grope our way into high houses, where no inhabitants were to be seen, and from the upper windows fire upon a battery or other object, until we were unearthed by the big guns of the fort, which were pointed at and pounded the house generally until it was demolished. We made several very rapid exits in such circumstances, and I fear

not a few must have made their final exit among the ruins. So the game went on hour after hour during the dark night. I did not think—there was no time for that. I was simply for the time a machine, moving with other machines, at the instigation of some unseen power. The confusion seemed to increase. On our side there appeared to be no fixed plan of operation. Our forces were not well in hand, while the French troops appeared rather to be recovering from a panic and to be getting into more compact and confident order. We were, at all events, with all our firing, making no headway.

Gradually the grey dawn stole noiselessly over the heavens, and with the hue of distant light thus cast around us, we could discern objects with rather more distinctness. I then found myself one of a considerable number of British soldiers, standing in an open space at some distance from the ramparts. How we got there I have no notion. Why we were there was equally incomprehensible. We received no commands, we had no apparent object or duty; but in a little while a party of French troops gave us something to do. They suddenly opened fire upon us, and we at once returned the compliment. The firing continued for a minute or two, when some one called, "Who'll volunteer to charge these fellows?" The volunteers were ready in an instant; formed, charged, and routed the enemy in an incredibly short time. We heard no more firing in that direction. But, scarcely had the charging party left us, when we were attacked to the right by another party. Again there was firing, again there was a call for volunteers, and again there was a bayonet charge, with a like result. Still a third party began pounding at us obliquely from the rear. There were more volunteers, and another charge. This charge took place in a street not very wide, and when the bayonetting began, or was about to begin, we were at first surprised on hearing some unmistakably English oaths, and next to find that our uncivil opponents, whom we were so bent on killing right off, were a portion of our own 33rd Regiment. The reconciliation was instantaneous and complete. The men joined us, and accompanied us to our former station, there to await what might next turn up. It is not thus that a garrison can be taken nor a battle won. But the confusion on our side was already considerable. It seemed constantly increasing. We were, however, ignorant of what had been doing elsewhere, or what it was now intended to do. We only knew that there in the square where we stood, surrounded by the ramparts and the enemy in the cold grey dawn of a frosty morning, we were a leaderless body of armed men, whose chief motive for present action was self-defence.

Day dawned, and we could observe a body of British soldiers marching on our left. At the same moment a party of French troops came facing them in the opposite direction. Each halted, and immediately formed into line. We watched

the whole proceeding, if not uninterested, at least inactive, spectators. The lines having been duly formed, the firing at once commenced. The balls flew thick and fast ; I would not say as thick as hail, but still with such quick rapidity that they might fairly have been said to fall like fast dropping showers. I was particularly struck with the coolness exhibited by some officers who trotted up and down in front of the British line, giving orders apparently, and yet I did not see a single one of them fall. If the French soldiers fired often, they do not seem, therefore, to have fired well. So far as I could observe, however, comparatively few fell on either side. It would, I dare say, be different now, with the improved needle-guns and rifles ; but the result then was not so deadly as one looking on would have expected it to have been. I could not say how long the firing continued. It was not very long ; and in the end the French column filed off and disappeared. Soon after—we were still standing inactive in our strange position—a French soldier was seen running along beside a paling, keeping it in front as a protection. Shots were immediately fired at him, but he coolly knelt behind his paling and returned our fire. He was a good shot, and seldom failed in either killing or wounding one of us. Of course, however, it must be remembered that he had a large body of men to fire at, we but a single soldier behind a paling. Our men became exasperated, and I observed several taking very deliberate aim, but still without effect. One, a little in front of me, moved forward with a determined grunt, as if he had finally taken a resolution to have done with this nonsense. He knelt slowly, took steady aim at the courageous Frenchman, but while raising his firelock slowly to the firing position, the Frenchman, who had been equally cool, equally determined, and more active in his movements, fired, and the fatal bullet entered my poor comrade's mouth, came out at the back of his head, and hit another soldier standing not far behind. The wounded man was helped to the rear, and I fear he died soon after. I, at least, never heard of him more. As for the Frenchman, he ceased firing after this. Whether he was killed or wounded I had no means of ascertaining, for our attention was diverted by another French soldier, accompanied by a boy, running across the esplanade. They were at once marked as "good game," and several shots were fired at them, but all missed. On seeing this, Captain Darrah stepped forward, took a loaded firelock from a soldier near, and, aiming deliberately, shot down both the Frenchman and the unfortunate boy who accompanied him. It was not a pleasant sight, and I did not think Captain Darrah was one who would have approved, far less have committed such an act. War, however, blunts the sense of horror, and men in action will do things which at other times their natures revolt from. No horror was expressed while the above scene was being enacted ; no regret was uttered on its termination. It was regarded as a simple act of

business, and there was even a laugh heard on its completion. He was only a Frenchman, I suppose, would be the reflection of most of those who witnessed it ; and at that time, in the eyes of a British soldier, a Frenchman was an object of contempt and loathing, to kill whom was matter for congratulation, if not some merriment. "Who wants amusement in the flame of battle?" asks Dr. Young. Whether wanted or not, it is often found, and among the strangest scenes. I have been in the heart of a bayonet charge, where our opponents and our friends were alike falling, and I have heard the quick and gallant despatch of an opponent followed by an exultant cry from the successful "operator," and a not quiet laugh from those who were near enough to witness the exploit.

For the present, however, our hard fighting was over. Bergen-op-Zoom was not taken. We still stood on that melancholy square, aimless and objectless. Fighting somewhere there was going on, but we knew little of it. We could hear the interrupted rattle of musketry and the occasional boom of a big gun, sounding in the sombre dawn somewhat like the lazy, long-drawn drone of a great funeral bell. But the end seemed approaching. We had few stragglers to engage our attention. No further attack was made on our position ; and no orders arrived for us to move or to do aught. We were ignorant of what had been passing elsewhere, but were of course still confident of victory, when, lo ! about nine o'clock in the morning, an order of a very unexpected nature came to us. We were bluntly told to lay down our arms. I can never forget the scene that followed. For a second or two no one spoke. The men were struck dumb with astonishment. To lay down arms was the last thing they would have dreamt of in the circumstances. Now, when they had recovered their surprise somewhat, there were a yell and shriek of protest that shook the dull air. Lay down arms, and to Frenchmen ! The thought was intolerable. We had come to hunt them out of Holland, and we should do it. We were not conquered. It could not be. "Lay down arms, after such a night !" shouted dozens in chorus ; "No ; never ! while a Frenchman is alive." It was gall and wormwood to the British soldier—a disgusting and disreputable piece of cowardice. The officer who first gave the hateful command, "Lay down your arms !" was cursed and reviled as a coward and poltroon ; and, as if to relieve themselves, and show the energy of their defiance, many began firing recklessly at they knew not what. For a time the officers prudently said little. They seemed anxious to allow the effervescence of passion to blow off. Then they again ordered the men to ground arms. Boldly standing in front of firelocks presented ready for firing, they soothingly entreated the men to consider what they were doing. Resistance was hopeless, the assault had utterly failed, and to continue the fight would only be to shed blood needlessly. Gradually these exhortations proved effectual. Some men in the front

ranks did ground their arms, lazily, reluctantly, and with many savage growls and deep-drawn curses; the others followed the example of the men in front; and we at last stood there a voluntarily disarmed band. It was a pitiable sight to see those strong determined fellows making this reluctant confession of defeat, and then waiting in sullen silence the approach of our French conquerors, who did not seek to conceal their feeling of triumphant gleefulness. A large body of them at once confronted us, seized our firearms, and striking the butt-ends against the ground, attempted to break them. Sometimes they succeeded. Often, however, as many of the guns were loaded, they succeeded only in shooting themselves. Such victims received no tokens of sympathy from us. On the contrary, their deaths were a source of congratulation and even amusement to the British prisoners. To kill a Frenchman was good; but to see Frenchmen, rejoicing in victory, wantonly killing themselves, was as a soothing balm to wounded spirits, and even brought back gleams of rejoicing to hearts that were full of grief and shame almost to bursting. The French soldiers continued this peculiarly fatal pastime longer than I would have considered sane men likely to do.

But an indignity more galling than we had yet suffered was now offered us. Our arms were gone, and with them, of course, all hope of even a pretence of resistance. We were at the mercy of the conquerors; and these did not seem inclined to temper their just satisfaction with a chivalrous consideration for the feelings of the vanquished. A strange silence settled over our group—all the more impressive that the expression on every countenance showed that this silence was due to force, not to choice. If any had spoken it would have been to hurl hate and defiance at the enemy; and to do so would have been wantonly to challenge instant death. Our conquerors had now the power, and they showed the will to exercise it. They closed gradually round our body of sullen men, and having surrounded us, they began to strip us of our accoutrements. Silence and inactivity were at that moment very bitter and hard to sustain. Our friends did not stop to undo the fastenings, but cut or tore off such regimental distinctions as they fancied. We were galled but helpless. Resistance would have been instant death; and with drooping heads, and hearts big with repressed rage and emotion, we were marched off to prison—worst of all, a French prison. Our way to confinement was through a succession of very sickening scenes. The wounded and the dying had not yet all been removed to hospital. Most of the dead still lay, ghastly spectacles, among the snow, the whiteness of which was now largely spotted with red, and not infrequently disfigured by dark pools of clotted blood. The damaged houses bore terrible testimony to the severity of the night's contest; and now and then we might discern the blanched faces of the citizens, glancing timidly from the windows. Their looks were hardly looks of sympathy with

us. I felt as if they regarded us as the authors of their fright and present sufferings. On crossing a bridge I witnessed one of the most touching, saddening sights it was ever my unfortunate lot to behold. Against the parapet leaned or sat the rigid form of a woman, a babe still held firmly in her stiff arms. She was dead, of course, had been dead probably for hours ; and the cause of death was evident from a layer of blood, now clotted, cold, and frozen, which had streamed downwards from a wound in her breast. The poor babe must have died from exposure, while the hapless mother had instinctively clasped her loving burden to her bleeding bosom, even in the agonies of death. This was war, stripped of tinsel glory, and hung round with trophies of gory horror instead. It is one thing to be brave in the heat and enthusiasm of the conflict, and perhaps to do acts of heroic valour ; to enjoy the elation of victory, or march off the field proud conquerors to the sound of drum and trumpet. But it is quite another thing to be trotted off the field guarded prisoners, arms gone, accoutrements torn from you, scenes of suffering all around, and before you the dismal prospect of probably protracted imprisonment, with the inglorious accompaniments of cold, hunger, and the insolent superciliousness of victorious enemies.

Such was our fate at Bergen-op-Zoom. It might have been different. I would be inclined to say, from what I afterwards heard, that it ought to have been different. The assault was well-planned : for a time things went well, and the fortress was all but in our hands. Death, however, overtook one leader after another until things fell into confusion, and complete defeat was the woeful result. Colonel Carleton, as I have before mentioned, was chief in command of the storming party. He had, as I have stated, made himself familiar with the internal arrangements of the fort and the French garrison in occupation. At the head of the first division of his army, he led them, in "the dark waste and middle of the night," to the foot of the ramparts. The movement was successfully accomplished, and in profound silence. The scaling ladders were ordered to be held in readiness, and the men to wait in perfect silence and motionless until they received a signal from the Colonel on the top of the ramparts. Then they were to fasten the scaling ladders, ascend as noiselessly as possible, and await further instructions. Having given these orders, Colonel Carleton departed, taking four picked men with him. He crept stealthily some distance along the foot of the rampart, and then ascended, going cautiously on the top until he neared a sentry whose attention was at the moment directed to another quarter. The Colonel crept up beside him, collared him suddenly, and demanded the countersign and parole. Refusal, the poor sentry was informed, would be instant death ; and helpless and frightened, he gave the required information. But it did not, I am sorry to say, save him : he fell by the Colonel's sword. Colonel Carleton had now the necessary signs and passwords for visiting rounds,

and went on his way warily, closely followed by his four men. Having quickly cleared the rampart of as many sentries as suited his purpose, he returned to the spot where he had left his troops, and gave the preconcerted signal. The ladders were at once fastened to the wall, and the men of the first division quietly and with surprising quickness, ascended to the top. All was going well. Colonel Carleton, pleased and alert, now led his large body of men along the rampart, taking comparatively easy possession of battery and bastion in rapid succession. He had thus, it was said, secured possession of every point of importance but one. Had Colonel Carleton lived, the victory would have been ours. But it was not to be so. When apparently on the very point of success, the Colonel was shot. He fell, muttering, "Poor Carleton! no more honourable." No more, indeed. He had assuredly fought his last battle. It was said the fatal shot was fired by a man of the Colonel's own regiment. This seemed at least probable. In justification or extenuation, it was urged that Colonel Carleton was a very strict disciplinarian; and that the men, exasperated by his severity on the parade ground, determined to take the first opportunity for revenge on the battle-field. If such was their determination, they succeeded, and their success was disastrous. I think it highly probable that such was the history and motive of poor Colonel Carleton's death. The best officers were sometimes thus made the victims of the savage spirit of revenge animating the worst soldiers. In my own regiment, an instance happened in which an officer, universally respected, and worthy of this respect, was shot, though happily not fatally. In the proper exercise of his duty he had to report a crime committed by an incorrigible scamp, who had suffered frequent punishment. The man was tried and sentenced to be flogged. He underwent his punishment, and subsequently lay some time in hospital. As soon, however, as he rejoined the ranks, he took the earliest opportunity of shooting the officer who had reported upon him. The deed was done in broad daylight, but fortunately, as I have said, the shot did not take fatal effect. It would probably have been different had the heated feelings of the soldier permitted him to put off the time of his revenge until war gave him an easy opportunity, with less personal risk of detection and punishment.

But Colonel Carleton was dead; and whoever shot him practically ensured the defeat of the British troops at Bergen-op-Zoom. By the time he was killed, he had done so much, and done it so rapidly—in little more than an hour—that, as was reported, the French had given up hopes of a successful defence. Other commanders of course took his place; but they could not so thoroughly carry out the plan of action as the fertile brain which had first conceived it, and so far carried it towards successful completion. It was believed that had Colonel Carleton but lived another half-hour, we should have been in secure possession of the fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom.

Thrice; it was said, the French had been on the point of surrendering. General Sherrat succeeded Colonel Carleton in the command; but there were almost immediate signs of uncertainty and confusion. Perhaps it was the darkness of the night, the difficulty of communicating with his supports, or possibly some ignorance of the plans and dispositions completed by Colonel Carleton. I know not; but the actual result was a visible increase of confusion. Perhaps it was about this time that we found ourselves on the square in the town firing at whoever attacked us, and ignorant how we got there, or why we were in that position. General Sherrat also was killed. He was succeeded by General Gall, who likewise fell mortally wounded. General Coole then took the command, and he survived the action.

These were the reports we afterwards heard of what was going on at other parts of the fortress during this dark and disagreeable night. The result of all was that in the morning we found ourselves marching, disconsolate and degraded, through such miserable scenes as I have described, to our prison-house. It turned out to be a large and handsome church, with much gilding and ornamentation. We were among the first arrivals on that dismal morning; but other parties continued coming in until, it was estimated, we numbered about 1,475. There was certainly no feeling of reverence among those fourteen hundred men: they had no thoughts of worship when they found themselves shut up in that splendid building. Our tongues were now loosened, and the voice of rage was heard screaming against the cowards who surrendered. It is just possible that the man who shot Colonel Carleton was among the vociferators. The complaints, at all events, were loud and savagely uttered. There was no peace in that handsome church, and, if there was good will, it was unexpressed. Many were of opinion—at least they shouted so very loudly—that our force was sufficient to take the place yet. The trifling circumstance of the want of arms was admitted, but it was maintained that we could soon take these from our enemies. It was a little pandemonium, where rage had taken the place of despair, and the noise and heat of dispute were correspondingly great. These demonstrations seemed to alarm our guardians; for soon after a field-piece was pointed at each entrance to the church. There could be no mistaking such a signal. If any of our brave ones thought of retaking our positions, and conquering the fortress, they knew now what they had to encounter. But though the noise and vociferation continued, we did not break our prison bonds, nor attempt it. Neither did we pray for our enemies, nor bless them—nor our friends either. We were in no prayerful or blessing mood. We had been tricked into surrender. That seemed to be the prevailing opinion. The British force, it was universally maintained, was sufficient to have taken the garrison, if it had been properly handled. But it was not properly handled, and hence we were prisoners. What might have

been done availed us nothing. We were no longer under British rule ; and British liberty was but a recollection, and a bitter one in the circumstances. We had the name, and probably the hearts and nature of Britons, but that was all. Our actual condition was that of French prisoners. Everything around reminded us of this bitter fact.

The rage of the soldiers gradually exhausted itself. Hope died. Despair lost its savage edge, and was replaced by despondency. We were hungry. I, at least, felt it keenly, for, as may be recollected, I had no dinner on the previous day. We left the savoury pot pleasantly boiling where we left our knapsacks. We had had a night's hard and dismal work, and now we were prisoners, and had no breakfast. The church was very handsome, as I have said, ornate with gilt and pretty carving, but there was no food in it. A well-boiled potato would have considerably altered our views of things in general at that moment, but the church did not supply it. A sermon on the text, "Man lives not by bread alone," might have been appropriate, but we had no preacher ; hungry men don't preach. The church, of course, was not meant for a prison ; and, of course, it had none of the conveniences which even the worst regulated prisons would have possessed. We were very miserable. We remained in that handsome church two days and a night. On no pretence were we permitted to leave it, even for a few minutes. Any one may, therefore, easily imagine what a frightful place it must have been, with upwards of fourteen hundred men confined within it for such a time. Our small picquet had not been able to rejoin our regiment during the whole of that dismal night, and I believe our unfortunate picquet was the only portion of the regiment that suffered imprisonment. On the second day of our incarceration, the feeling of emptiness in the stomach—it did not seem hunger then—was most depressing. We looked in vain for anything to satisfy the dull craving. Our captors, if they had any food, kept it all for themselves. At length, however, in the after part of the second day of our imprisonment, the inhabitants of Bergen took compassion on our condition. They must have somehow known that we were kept without food ; and, having obtained permission, the door was opened during the course of the afternoon, and two large hampers of boiled potatoes were emptied on the floor of the sacred building. The dropping of manna in the wilderness could not have been a more pleasant sight than these savoury potatoes tumbled on the floor of the church. But it was a momentary vision. They disappeared like the lightning flash ; and, while my eyes were refreshed, my stomach was not replenished. The hampers seemed large ; but what were even two large hampers of the biggest potatoes among fourteen hundred hungry men ? Only those close at hand could touch them. Myself and hundreds more had to be content with a momentary glimpse of the smoking hot potatoes, not a vestige of which was visible

a minute after they had been laid on the floor. There was no fire in the church, and, our knapsacks being far away, we had no change of clothing. We entered our prison with clothes almost frozen on our backs. They thawed somewhat during the night, and when we left they were almost dry.

When, however, things are at their worst they sometimes mend. At early gloaming of the second day of our captivity, a ration of bread and beef was served out to us. Of the bread every man got his share, but the beef was given us in large quantities, and raw; and, as we had the means neither of dividing nor of cooking it, we left it ungrudgingly a free-will offering to our successors. Our bread was in the worst possible condition. It was old, sour, and mouldy; but, in the circumstances, it was perhaps better so than otherwise. If it had been new, we might perchance have eaten more of it than was good for us. It, however, proved to be the prelude to liberty. We were marched out of our ecclesiastical prison-house immediately after receiving our rations, and we then ascertained that our officers had fared little better than we had ourselves. The French had neither food nor accommodation for their prisoners; and they had, therefore, immediately begun negotiations for our release. The result was that we were set at liberty, on condition that we should not again lift arms against France for a full year from that date. This was the upshot of our going to Holland to hunt the French.

The conditions being settled in as binding a manner as possible, we were escorted out of Bergen, and quartered in a village not far off. I had now some hope of getting rest, as well as food; but again I was disappointed. We had our liberty. We had entered on tolerably decent and comfortable quarters; infinitely preferable, at all events, to the pandemonium of noise, filth, and hunger we had just left. But, in the excited and somewhat weak condition in which we then were, very little alarmed us; and a few musket shots fired at the Bergen end of the village, in which we were located, set our fears on edge at once. What was the reason of it? was the question on the lips of every one, and in a twinkling every soldier was out anxious for an answer. Rumour was quick with its disagreeable suggestions. The French, it was said, were following us, determined again to make us prisoners, or, at least, all who should survive the shooting operations already begun. What were we to do? Remain and be slaughtered, or fly and have the chance of escape? We were unarmed. We were weak from want of food, filthy in condition, and sick at heart. The prison or a bullet were unpleasant alternatives, especially to men in our condition; and the only hope or chance of escape seemed to lie in flight. There was no time nor opportunity for a general consultation, but, when a few of the more active set the example of running, the panic spread quickly, and in a few minutes the whole fourteen hundred warriors, who had landed in

Holland to hunt the French out of it, were running helter-skelter as for their very lives, on the mere rumour that the French were coming to shoot them or take them prisoners. I, of course, ran with the rest, and ran with a swiftness that surprised myself. Whither we were running was a matter on which we were profoundly ignorant. We knew not, neither did we care. It was enough to be in motion, and to believe that we were increasing the distance between us and the musket shots. But in a little while it was observed that the firing had ceased. Some more hasty and breathless consideration led to the conclusion that there must surely be no pursuit, for no footsteps could be heard. There was a halt; a brief consultation followed, and we resolved very cautiously to return to the village. We did so, each man pricking his ears, holding his head well forward, so as to catch at once the first faint sound of danger, and keeping his heels in readiness for instant flight, should that sound be heard. In this way we stealthily approached our quarters—a queer group. But not a sound was heard, not a funeral or any other note, as with peering eyes and on tiptoe cautiously walking, we sought to pierce the darkness and discern the enemy. No enemy, however, appeared. No more shots were heard, and by the time we re-entered the village courage and confidence had so far returned that we began to walk with some composure, and regained our quarters, certain we had been the victims of a causeless panic. We soon after learned the origin and reason of it. A party of our men, it seemed, had somehow got possession of liquor, and had proceeded, with the alacrity of practised experts, to fill themselves drunk. Having satisfactorily accomplished this purpose, they quarrelled among themselves, and resolved to settle the dispute by duel on the most approved principles. How they procured guns was a mystery even to themselves; but they did get them. Seconds were duly arranged, and the duellists fired away at each other in the dark. These were the shots we heard, and which put such panic in our hearts and such mettle in our heels. Neither of the combatants were hurt, but I fear their random shots must have done serious injury somewhere, for the duel took place not far from the village houses.

We had no more food, but enjoyed a tolerably good rest that night; and we required it. Next day we expected a ration from the careful British authorities; and, having nothing else to do, looked anxiously for the beef cart. But it was in vain. All through the morning and forenoon we stared ourselves stupid, but nothing came. The gnawings of hunger were hard to bear. Even a little more of the stale, sour bread of the French prison would have been welcome. But it was not to be had. At the door of every billet-house there were anxious watchers, with pale, cadaverous, and weary looks. If a child appeared with a bit of bread in his hand, which he carelessly munched, as at a thing he was well accustomed to, he

immediately became the centre of observation. Had he been met by a stray soldier in a lonely place, I fear he would soon have been relieved of his little luncheon, but his safety lay in the numbers of hungry men who intently watched his masticatory operations. No one could venture on stealing that tiny piece of bread where so many wanted it. At length, however, far on in the afternoon, we had one short gleam of hopeful joy. A covered waggon was observed slowly nearing the village, in charge of three officers and two natives. Every face among us brightened, for it must be nothing else but the beef cart. Every billet sent out its representative to attend and get the necessary rations. I was one of these, and, as the waggon came up with melancholy slowness, I joined my expectant fellow-representatives in the rear. In this way we followed the waggon until it reached the village church. Here there was a halt, and the three officers went into an adjoining house, remaining some time. For us this was a weary wait. Food seemed within our grasp, and yet we dared not touch it. Why, we began to ask, do the officers tarry so long? Surely, they must know that for three days we have been practically without food? At length they emerged from their temporary retreat. They seemed pensive and sad. They looked not at us. They gave no sign or order to us to attend. They walked slowly, and with, as I afterwards recalled, an expression of deep sorrow on their faces, to the waggon, and began to uncover it. In this operation we were much interested. We watched it eagerly, and with all the impatience of hunger. We prepared for the reception of the expected rations, so that no time might be lost, and, when the cover was removed, rushed to the side of the waggon; but, O horror! it was not beef that was there displayed! The waggon was laden with the bodies of dead officers, which their living companions had been permitted to collect from the battle-field for decent burial. The bodies were interred, and a board placed at the head of each grave in commemoration of the occupant. We, who had unwittingly followed a rude hearse in the belief it was a bread cart, returned empty handed to our disconsolate comrades; but the shock we had received had, at least, dulled the keen edge of our appetites. We felt something akin to sickness instead.

The rations, however, did arrive at last; and, having satisfied hunger, and restored ourselves to some measure of cleanliness and comfort, we began to gossip about the assault, and some rather prominent persons engaged therein. Where, it was asked, was Sergeant Harper, who made himself, as may be remembered, conspicuous on the voyage out? He was dead, poor fellow! He had been wounded early in the fray, and had been placed under cover somewhere. Hearing, however, of the surrender, the horror of becoming a French prisoner so wrought upon him that he attempted to escape, and was shot dead. As for Jack Heighlands, who was nearly

always drunk, he sustained his reputation on the night of the assault. He was very drunk then, but bravely followed the example of those about him, and loaded and fired with extraordinary rapidity. It was supposed, however, that the enemy was in less danger from Jack Heighland's musket than his own comrades. If he fired, it seemed a matter of no moment to Jack where his firelock pointed. He became so reckless in the end that, as was reported, some of his comrades shot him dead, as an additional security for their own lives. William Dallas I discovered many years after working as a labourer in the Persley quarries. He had been severely wounded. A ball entered his right shoulder, and, after long suffering and much trouble, it was cut out of his left. Hugh Porter, long well known as a peripatetic dealer in old books in the town and county of Aberdeen, was of the unfortunate storming party at Bergen-op-Zoom. He had also, as he told me, a younger brother there, who had his head grazed and partly shorn of hair by a passing bullet. He suffered no other visible injury, and afterwards emigrated to America, where he became a Latter Day Saint, and where, perhaps, he still waits for the reappearance of the chosen phophet. Whether the wound he received at Bergen-op-Zoom had any influence on his religious conversion I cannot take upon me to say.

Fame waits on success. Our army at Bergen-op-Zoom, both officers and men, did all, and suffered quite as much, as have been done and suffered by the bravest in the most brilliant military actions. But we failed; and the conduct of all on that weary night—of those who died as well as of those who lived—has been forgotten or ignored. British military history is all but silent as to the storming of Bergen-op-Zoom. Had poor Colonel Carleton lived to successfully complete his well-planned work, his life would have been recorded in brilliant annals as that of a hero with the halo of glory round his brow. But he was killed; his plans were not successfully carried out; and he is truly "Poor Carleton! honourable no more!" Poor General Sherratt; poor General Gore! are both alike dead, and "honourable no more." A few survivors were singled out, and rewarded for individual bravery; but it was only after much difficulty, urgent solicitation, and by the pressure, I believe, of powerful influence. Our sergeant-major was one of these. He had saved the regimental colours; and for this, after interminable trouble and dunning at the Horse Guards, he was rewarded with a commission. He died two days after its receipt. Without wishing to make any personal complaint—for, though I obeyed orders, and came through the storming ordeal, as I hope, without disgrace, I do not presume to claim credit for conspicuous acts of gallantry—I may be pardoned for saying that I and the members of the picquet, called away so suddenly from our dinner and the comparative comforts of that out-house to share in the stern realities of war, were but stingily treated in the matter of our knapsacks and their contents. We were ordered

to leave them behind, and we never saw them again. The loss was a source of great inconvenience. It left us without a change of linen, or any of the other slender comforts which are contained in the knapsack of a private soldier. It cost us rather more than £3 to replenish our lost stock ; and all that the war authorities allowed us was nineteen shillings and ninepence each. But we survived the inconvenience, though we always regretted the loss of many little articles of trifling intrinsic worth, but invaluable to their owners from old and loving association. They became mere "pleasures of memory."

AFTER THE STORMING.

We spent some months in billet after our departure from Bergen-op-Zoom. We had little duty and less discipline. Idle soldiers, freed from the stern restraints of military rule, are never very orderly ; and our detachment of discharged prisoners was no exception. Crimes were frequent ; drunkards were abundant, though the gin they consumed could not have been honestly paid for. Punishments were, indeed, threatened, and sometimes even ordered ; but, as they were never inflicted, they ceased to have any terrors for evil-doers. We were billeted on the inhabitants, and in many cases our presence must have been an intolerable inconvenience and annoyance to the good people ; but generally we found the Dutch, as well as the Belgians, Germans, and French, very generous in their treatment of soldiers, much more generous and kind than the soldiers were grateful. For in my experience I did not find gratitude a military virtue. In the billet where I was lodged four soldiers were quartered—two from the 44th Regiment, I think, and two from the 21st. One of those from the 44th was a lad not much older than myself, and, as he had not learned the pleasures derivable from drinking and smoking, we clubbed together, leaving the other two to their congenial tastes of gin-drinking and other estimable enjoyments. Our host, or landlord, was one Hipertia Herkelines, a labourer, who earned tenpence a day, when employed—which was not regularly—and on this he had to support a wife and three children. Now he had to partially provide for four soldiers as well. Of course, our daily rations were regularly supplied ; but our host had to furnish, in addition, salt, potatoes, and other things. My companion and I endeavoured to make ourselves as useful as possible by cutting firewood and engaging in such other useful occupations for the household as we could manage. I made windmills for the children, which were regarded as marvels, and some simple wooden utensils for the house, for which the kindly frauw was profusely grateful. I wished to make a diminutive water-mill ; but there was no

brawling Scotch burn bickering down a stony strath there. We had nothing but the sluggish canals, and they were of no use for water-mills. In this way my companion and I established ourselves as the favourites of the humble household. But the burden was great, and Hipertia sought and obtained permission to reduce its weight. He received an official document, giving him leave to dismiss two of his guests. But he was here confronted by a grave difficulty—which two should he dismiss? The two favourites belonged to different regiments, and he could not discharge the two others and leave them. The result was that, after weighing the matter seriously, the official paper was laid aside, and we remained as we were. At last, however, the order came to march, and we had all to leave. We had to start early in the morning; and I was then more than surprised, knowing what a grievous tax we had been for months upon that poor family, to find father, mother, and children, waiting to bid us farewell, with evident marks of sorrow on their countenances, and a warm breakfast prepared, which we enjoyed very much. The Herkelines, old and young, were in tears when we left, as if they were bidding adieu to dear relations. I thought they would have been glad to get rid of us; and I fear we were not so grateful as we ought to have been for the attentions of these excellent and very kindly people.

It was in the early summer of 1814 that we bade farewell to our good friends, the Herkelines, and proceeded on our march to Antwerp. Napoleon had been sent to reign king and emperor of the pleasant little island of Elba. The treaty of Paris had been signed, and all prisoners were set free. To us, however, this meant a decided curtailment of liberty—or licence, perhaps I should say. There was no more idleness, but stern duty and strict discipline. Arms and ammunition were served out to us, and we were sent to garrison Antwerp; for Antwerp and Bergen were both given up by the French on the conclusion of the treaty of Paris. We occupied barracks in the citadel. The great arsenal, extending some thousand yards along the Scheldt, was still in the possession of the French; they had a number of war-ships on the stocks. We placed a cordon of sentries round the place—a mark of attention evidently not relished by the Frenchmen; for the marksmen among them seemed to occupy their leisure time in killing or wounding our unfortunate sentinels. This was intolerable in a time of peace. Three sentries had been shot dead and several wounded, when our commanding officer, Major-General Crawford, energetically demanded the punishment of the murderers, and of course the cessation of such one-sided hostilities. But no attention seems to have been paid to the demand, and the shooting continued. Thoroughly exasperated at last, General Crawford marshalled a portion of the garrison, marched to the arsenal, and, as was said, threatened to shoot or bayonet every man in the place if the murderers were not given up. Explanations were made, and apologies offered, and our men

were marched back to barracks. The shooting ceased ; and we heard in a few days afterwards that an execution had taken place in the arsenal.

I was much pleased to have the opportunity of spending some months in a city so renowned as Antwerp. Everything was new—new and strange to me, at all events. The streets, the buildings, especially the splendid Cathedral, with its immense stone spire, of the height and beauty of which I could have formed no conception, were all constant sources of wonder to me. I wandered among them often, and felt as if I never could see enough. But I shall not now attempt any description of what I saw. Antwerp was strongly fortified. The broad deep waters of the Scheldt were in themselves a strong protection. The largest ships of the line came safely and easily to Antwerp while I was there. Then, forts stretched for miles along the banks of the river, while others surrounded the town at short distances. The city fortresses alone, as I was told, mounted 700 pieces of ordnance, bombs, and cannon. The Duke of Wellington, from his victorious Peninsular campaign, visited Antwerp, and examined its means of defence. I was, fortunately, one of those who escorted the Roman-nosed and Roman-souled Commander round the ramparts, and we cheered him lustily, for we felt very proud of him. It was the first time I had seen the “hero of a hundred battles,” but it was not the last.

HOME AGAIN.

We had a four months' stay at Antwerp, but much as I liked rambling among its quaintly-pretty streets, I was very glad when we were ordered home. Our route lay through Ghent, and over a few of its 270 bridges ; through Bruges, whose great steeple of Notre Dame—equally high, though not so handsome, as that of Antwerp—was visible for miles before we entered the town, and over a few of that city's many bridges—on to Ostend, where we embarked. I was thoroughly homesick. My heart and mind were in England from the time the order for home arrived. I had no great inclination to note the scenery on our way to Ostend ; and on arrival in harbour there the welcomest, pleasantest sounds I heard, or could hear, were the voices of English sailors. I felt a strange, strong heave of warm emotion at the sound, and could almost have embraced those rough, but kindly, tars I heard speaking a tongue then so strange, and yet so welcome, in my ears. As we neared England, an intense longing seized me to have something English to eat, and I soon discovered that this longing was general. When we had anchored in Harwich Harbour, another young Scotchman and I resolved that we would fast until we landed next morning, that we might the more thoroughly relish an English wheaten loaf. We had been so long accustomed to the black rye bread of the

Dutch and the coarse ration bread, that the very thought of them was nauseating. But the "best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley." So it was with my companion and I. We found our fasting only a preparation for severe hunger, without having the means of satisfying it. We slept little, and quickly and gladly answered the first sound of the morning bugle. We landed early, and, on being marshalled in the square at Harwich, to our horror, we discovered that not a single shop was open, and scarcely an inhabitant to be seen. The glory and gratification of eating an English wheaten loaf had therefore to be postponed. But we were on British ground, and bore our disappointment with resignation. Our ultimate destination was Colchester, but our day's march was only to Thorpe and Wyllie, a distance of nine miles.

We started on the march with light hearts. We were at home. We had just returned from fighting our country's battles; and would not the gentlemen who lived at home at ease, and even ordinary citizens who might live sometimes a little uneasily, all combine to give us a gladdening welcome, and cheer us on our way? We were not conquerors; but we were dressed similar to those who were, and who was to know the difference? I was elated and hopeful, and perfectly ready to accept with generous magnanimity the plaudits of the admiring crowds which would, no doubt, line the roads on our march. My experience in Holland served to foster this delusion. My subsequent experience in other countries served only to embitter the feelings in contemplating the contrast between the soldier's treatment at home and abroad. My present delusion was quickly dispelled; and I found that the glorious soldier, whether conqueror or not, was in England regarded rather with aversion than with pride. Soon after leaving Harwich, I felt very thirsty, and turned to a neat-looking cottage by the roadside, with the intention of soliciting a cup of water. A woman stood in the door, looking at the soldiers passing; but as soon as she observed me making towards the door, she hurriedly retreated, slammed the door in my face, and, I believe, bolted the door for further security. I did not think it judicious to knock after this, and rejoined my comrades on the march. A little further on, I made a like attempt at a similar cottage. The door was shut, but I opened it, and modestly asked for a drink of water. A man sitting by the fire stared at me for a minute, then turned away his head, with the inhospitable remark, "We have no water!" This was far from encouraging; but a little further on I again ventured to repeat my request. An elderly man sat by the fire, reading a newspaper. When I asked for a little water, he, too, gazed on me for a time, and then dryly observed, "We have nothing but beer." My conquering dream vanished. I was humbled, and now bore with the thirst as best I could. Speaking from my own experience, I am sure that no Dutchman, no Frenchman, no German, or

Belgian would have refused to do me the small service asked, as did these comfortable English peasants.

As I have said, we started on our march with light hearts, believing we had not far to walk. But suspicions began to be whispered that something was wrong. We had already walked as far as our destination was said to be, and yet there was no sign of Thorpe and Wyllie. Inquiries were made of the country people. Some did not know; some were uncertain; and we found at last that we were almost at Morningtree, twelve miles from Harwich, and nine from Thorpe, our actual destination. What was to be done? We had already travelled twelve miles without food or other refreshment, and would gladly have rested at Morningtree, for a time at least. But our officers thought differently. They held a consultation, and resolved that, as they had been ordered to march to Thorpe and Wyllie, to Thorpe and Wyllie they would go. This was the more exasperating as Colchester, our final destination, was the same distance from Morningtree as Thorpe was; and why not go straight there? We could not understand it. By going to Thorpe we had other nine miles of a walk, which would, besides, take us three or four miles further from Colchester, and thus lengthen the following day's march. By going straight to Colchester, we would have been at rest at once, and would have received two days' marching money. All these things were hotly discussed by the soldiers; and, when the orders were given to march for Thorpe, the men were almost frantic. They were angry, they were hungry, and they had no money to buy food by the way; for our pay had not been advanced to us. I have never since heard such oaths and imprecations as were freely uttered by my comrades as we turned into a by-road, in the direction of Thorpe. The officers wisely stopped behind, allowing the men to swear and march at ease, until we neared Thorpe, by which time the angry passions of the soldiers had somewhat subsided.

The business had certainly been very greatly mismanaged, but we reached Thorpe without any act of violence having been committed. We were billeted in public-houses, as is the custom in England. Twenty-six of us had quarters in one inn, and on arriving there our first question was as to dinner. The reply that it would be two hours before it would be ready was far from pleasant to men some of whom had fasted since the previous night, and had walked twenty-one miles with empty stomachs. But we had to make a virtue of necessity, and submit. I was more fortunate than the others; for, having been able frequently to assist the pay-sergeant in his duties, he now showed his appreciation of those services by treating me to a drink of beer and some bread and cheese. These refreshments were very welcome. Our loss in killed had been heavy. We left England fully 600 strong. At Thorpe we drew billets for 199 men. A few were doubtless left in hospital at

Antwerp, but altogether we must have lost about 400 men in our comparatively brief and unsuccessful campaign. Dinner was at last served, and the soldiers, hungry and angry, ate voraciously and grumbled savagely. We were then shown into a large room, where swearing and grumbling were again freely indulged in until it was time for bed. But now our already wounded feelings received another frightful shock. There were no beds for us. A lot of straw was thrown into the room, and we were told to make the best of it. Some took the straw quietly, and went to sleep. The majority, however, resolved to sit up, and spend the night in harmonious execrations of the authorities who permitted such treatment of the brave defenders of their country's honour.

This, I believe, is a fair sample of the average English billet for soldiers. We found it very different on the Continent. In our marches through Holland and Flanders we were frequently quartered in houses in the country, several miles from our next morning's place of assembly. But on our arrival in such cases every possible exertion seemed to be made to secure our comfort. We were at once shown to a place to deposit our accoutrements, toilet requisites were provided, and generally, as soon as our hurried ablutions were ended, we found a substantial and well-cooked meal waiting us in another room. After dinner we had fruit in abundance; or, if in the summer season, we would be taken out to the garden, ladders planted against the trees, and we were left there with instructions to satisfy ourselves. On one such occasion I remember seeing seven ladders so placed in one garden, and all were occupied. Then we almost invariably had a comfortable bed; and next morning, after enjoying an excellent breakfast, we would not infrequently be driven in cart or waggon to the regimental headquarters. And all this was done cheerfully, without fee or reward—often, too, I am sorry to say, without much gratitude being shown for it. In France—notably about Valenciennes—I remember several feasts being given in honour of the British soldier in billet. Throughout France, too, I observed a marked preference shown to Scotchmen. It may be that this was owing, in some measure, to the traditional remembrances of the friendly intercourse between France and Scotland, when both were leagued against the common enemy, England. But, if so, these associations seemed better known and remembered in France than in Scotland. I was quartered for some time in the champagne country, where the peasants seemed very poor and frugal in their ways, but, withal, hospitable and kind. Wine was always given us when we asked for a drink. It was not wine of a rare vintage; indeed, we were informed that, from some cause, it had become unmarketable, yet it was, nevertheless, a very agreeable drink. The peasants lived entirely on the produce of their fields. The only “foreign” commodity I ever noticed in use was salt. They had neither coffee nor tea. A pig was to be found

attached to every household. It was fed well, and killed at the end of the year, and this formed the family supply of animal food. The labourer would come in the morning from vine-dressing, eat a slice of bread and an apple or two, and return to work without having entered his dwelling. This was his breakfast. Dinner, served usually between twelve and one, was a slightly more elaborate meal, but apples were here again the principle ingredient.

These reminiscences were suggested by the sight of the sullen and cheerless group in the bare room of the inn at Thorpe. I do not know what might have happened had not a soldier, who lay near me, risen from his straw couch, after a while, and tuning a fiddle that was in the room, struck up a lively air. Never was the power of music better exemplified, nor was it ever more opportunely introduced. The one moment the men were sullen, sulky, and prepared almost for mutiny; the next they had forgotten their fatigue and their grievances in a rousing dance; and the dance and the song ceased not until the morning light broke gently on the animated scene. The bugle sounded. It was answered with alacrity—aye, and even something like cheerfulness.

We marched without further incident to Colchester Barracks, where we remained for a fortnight, and then received orders to start for Scotland. We marched to Tilbury Fort, on the Thames, opposite Gravesend, and there shipped for Leith. In sailing down the Thames, I remember we counted nine men, or the bodies of nine men, hanging dead in chains. Such sights had not been uncommon before, but since then have become impossible. At one point two were hanging together; at another one solitary criminal had met his gruesome fate alone; but still further down the river we observed a group of six, dangling like horrid spectres in a dismal nightmare. I could learn nothing of the crimes for which these poor sinners were thus gibbeted; but I recollect there was some discussion among us as to whether the six were not victims of the mutiny at the Nore—an unlikely circumstance, seeing that the mutiny took place some sixteen or seventeen years before then.

We landed at Leith after a tolerable passage, and at once marched to Edinburgh Castle. Here we had hard work. The garrison was small, and we had, on an average, but two or, at the utmost, three nights in bed in the week. On the Continent, however, we had seldom had so much, so that the inconvenience was borne without absolute impatience. Recruiting was prosecuted with energy. Our regiment was a mere skeleton. On parade it was no very unusual thing to find one sergeant and a private all that could be present of one company, while a corporal and three men would represent another. On one occasion I recollect our having a hearty laugh when a sergeant and corporal were all that mustered of a company, and they gravely set to inspect each other in the most approved and

formal manner. It was, therefore, imperatively necessary that the empty ranks should be filled up as fast as possible ; and in recruiting, although we were a Fusilier and Grenadier regiment, many queer fish were hauled into the net of the recruiting sergeant, and some even seemed to have *let* their wits before entering, so little did they afterwards show themselves possessed of. But all were accepted. The ranks had to be filled up somehow ; and the recruiting corps seemed to have got a hint to be less particular about quality than quantity.

After a few months spent at Edinburgh, we removed to Stirling Castle, and while there I obtained a short furlough to visit my friends at Aberdeen. I arrived there with a light heart and a lighter purse. My short sojourn in Aberdeen was a brief glimpse of real pleasure, which would have been unalloyed but for one circumstance. My father's commercial misfortunes had compelled his removal to Aberdeen. He was in but indifferent health, yet the possibility of purchasing my discharge was fully discussed, and would, I dare say, have been accomplished had it been otherwise attainable. But at that particular time no discharge would have been granted to any one, whatever sum had been offered for it. I therefore resumed my military duties ; and a short time after my return to Stirling, we were ordered back to Edinburgh Castle. I was not sorry ; for I thought the Stirling barracks very uncomfortable ; and at Edinburgh we found the number of duty men considerably increased, so that the work was much lighter. While at Edinburgh Castle, a draft was taken from our regiment and sent to the first battalion. Among those drafted was pay-Sergeant Kyle, a good friend of mine, though it was said, and I believed it, that he had played false to some of the men. I ruminated not a little on this ; and at a modest convivial meeting, held in honour of our departing comrades, I made a speech, in which with some fervour I denounced the Sergeant's conduct. My maiden speech made a considerable impression. All were surprised, but especially Sergeant Kyle, who, whatever he had done to others, had certainly done me no harm. I acted, to say the least of it, indiscreetly, and in the circumstances, scarcely in good taste, though I felt an honest indignation at the wrongs which I believed had been inflicted.

We were not permitted to remain so long in Edinburgh as we had expected. Early in 1815, Napoleon escaped from Elba, and, appearing suddenly in France, was quickly at the head of 125,000 soldiers, eager for war, and full of devotion to their commander. Europe was at once in commotion. Troops were everywhere moving about ; and while soldiers marched to meet the enemy, clergymen prayed for success. I was one of a second draft sent to join Wellington at Brussels. We embarked at Leith for Ostend, where we arrived in the middle of June. It was near the time, if not on the very day when Waterloo was fought. We were pushed

onward with all expedition. We were transferred to canal barges, and no one was allowed on shore on any pretence, though one soldier with a great thirst for gin did manage it somehow, and was drowned in attempting to get on board again. He was of course tipsy. We were two or three days voyaging in these barges, and the tedium of the journey was somewhat lightened by a rather grotesque incident. A Flemish Jew had got on board our barge, intent on business. He was ready to purchase anything the soldiers might be willing to part with for a small consideration; but as this was illegal, the Fleming was soon put under arrest. While the matter was being reported to the captain, the men contrived by signs to make the poor Jew understand and believe that he would be hanged for his crime. He was evidently in great terror, and when the captain made his appearance to institute an inquiry, the unhappy Jew dexterously slipped overboard, dived deep in the water, and turned up on the bank, a ludicrous spectacle. We left him dripping, but with a grin of pleasure on his sinister countenance. He believed he had escaped death.

Our canal voyage ended, we were quartered in a little village. There were now fewer signs of hurry. We remained in our new quarters for a week. But by that time Waterloo had been fought. Our services were not required on the battle-field, and we soon after began our march for France to join the army of occupation. Before starting, however, an important change took place in the command of our regiment. For some time we had been under the orders of Major M'Queen, a decidedly incompetent officer, with small mental calibre. He was, while we were stationed in this Belgian village, succeeded by a Colonel Maxwell. We commenced our march very soon afterwards. On the first day we traversed the field of Waterloo. It was now still and deserted, with no sign of the terrible struggle which had been waged there a few days before but the numerous mounds of black earth which had been hurriedly laid over the heaps of slain. All around was desolation. The growing grain had been trodden flat in the fields, and destroyed. The houses were mostly ruins and empty, and even in those where there were still inmates there was little or no furniture, and every sign of squalor and poverty. The unfortunate inhabitants looked very dejected and sad. They had been treated with great cruelty, and complained especially of the conduct of the Prussians. They took everything in every house they could possibly carry off; and sometimes, where nothing was left, the inmates were bayoneted. Ear-rings were torn from the ears of the possessors, and, in every respect, the behaviour of the soldiers seems to have been severe and cruel. Such, at least, were the stories told us by the people who still hovered about the miserable, battered houses remaining around Waterloo.

I was glad to leave the field. We saw little of Colonel Maxwell while in the village, but it would seem that he had been meditating deeply on projects for the

reformation of the regiment, of which he had received but an indifferent character. Although we had not then seen much of the new colonel, we were permitted to know that he had ordered new "cats," made of the hardest garden line that could be procured—with nine cords on each "cat," and nine knots on each cord. This was not pleasing intelligence, but it was not all. Colonel Maxwell appears to have thoroughly studied the art and science of flogging, and to have expended all the energies of his mind in devising how to make the torture most painful. It had hitherto been the rule in flogging that the drum-major regulated the time of the strokes by slowly counting one, two, three, up to twenty-five, at the end of which a fresh drummer took the lash in hand. Colonel Maxwell, however, made an ingeniously cruel improvement upon these rules and regulations; he ordered that in flogging, in future, an interval of two minutes should elapse between each application of the lash! How often have I, in witnessing these cruel flagellations, wished that the Colonel himself was the subject operated upon! He would, I am sure, have received the full benefit of his own cunningly-devised system for increasing the torturing misery of his victims.

We very soon had dire experience that Colonel Maxwell meant ruthlessly to put his rules into practice. On the second day of our march we were filed into a grass field near the road. Two drum-head court-martials were at once constituted, two sets of triangles were put up, and thirty-two prisoners were quickly tried, convicted, and sentenced. What the offences were I cannot now recall; but every prisoner was flogged. The large majority received only twenty-five lashes; some got fifty, and one, if I recollect rightly, received a hundred. It was a horrible spectacle; and worse still, except in a few cases where the doctors objected, all those miserable men had at once, on being released from the triangles, again to strap on their knapsacks and resume the march with the regiment. No suggestion as to the necessity of strict discipline, and so forth, can excuse such fierce and savage cruelty. The man that conceived it and insisted on carrying it out, whatever good qualities he may have possessed—and Colonel Maxwell had some good qualities—deserved the reprobation of all honest men.

We were now in the middle of July, marching under a hot sun, and walking in a crowd, and along dirty, dusty roads, we suffered severely from thirst. Each man carried a small canteen of water, but it was soon exhausted, and was generally too warm to be palatable. But to be thirsty, and to seek to allay the thirst, seemed to be heinous offences in the eyes of Colonel Maxwell. By law, soldiers on the march were permitted a halt of five minutes every hour. On the third day of our present march, we were halted within four or five yards of a large pool of water. There was a rush to it at once; and, panting and jaded, many stepped into the water to cool their feet.

All drank. Suddenly the bugle sounded to fall into rank ; and, as soon as we had done so, a number of those who were considered, for what reason I know not, the leaders in this thirsty rush were conveyed prisoners to the rear. Could mere wanton cruelty further go? Not one of these poor men, I believe, had a thought of offending. They had been halted in due course, according to military regulation. When water was so near, and no thought of discipline forbade it, why should they have been prevented from slaking their thirst, and partially cooling their perspiring bodies? A real commander of men would have been glad of the opportunity thus afforded for refreshing his men, and would have been inclined rather to overlook than to search for breaches of discipline, had any been even committed. But not so Colonel Maxwell. He seemed to have some pleasure in seeing the triangle erected, and contemplating the sufferings of its victims.

We reached Mous the next day, and immediately on entering the city, were formed into hollow square. The Colonel then briefly addressed us, stating that there were several prisoners to be disposed of ; that he had found it impossible to find a place large enough to contain the whole regiment ; but that he would like the left section of each company to be witnesses of the approaching spectacle. I was in that unfortunate section of my company. It was, indeed, a bitter misfortune. We were marched into what seemed to be the back court of an inn. A court-martial was constituted, and one triangle erected. The triangle was soon occupied, and continued so until late at night. Indeed it was so late that the Court required candle-light near the end of its proceedings. And these were the long days of July. Thirty seven prisoners were flogged that day ; the majority for having dared, during a regulation halt, to quench their thirst in a pool close by, a few for drunkenness, and one or two for being late on parade. My heart sunk, and I felt an inexpressible loathing, when, at the end of the dismally cruel proceedings, I saw the Colonel deliberately take a spade and cover up the pool of blood that had gathered at the foot of the triangle, from the lacerated backs of those thirty-seven soldiers. This cool proceeding made the preceding cruelty seem ten times more revolting.

It was now quite dark, and I had some difficulty in finding my billet. When I did stumble upon it, I had to rouse the inmates, for they were all in bed. My comrade was fast asleep ; and I could not help somewhat bitterly reflecting that, notwithstanding his having had the whole day to himself, while I, hungry and disgusted, had to remain watching the triangle with its horrible tortures, he had not thought of providing any refreshment for me. I wept, and would at that moment gladly have died. I was solitary and friendless, with scenes of great suffering to look back upon ; with the almost certainty of other similar scenes to look forward to. I felt a constant terror lest I should be late for parade, and visions of being tied on that

dreadful triangle constantly haunted me. Many better men had so suffered; it might be my turn at any time. I slept at last, and fortunately awoke in good time in the morning. My great difficulty was to rouse my companion; for he took things very easily and slept very soundly.

We succeeded, however, in reaching the parade ground as the bugle sounded. It was again burning hot, the roads dusty, and our thirst consequently intense. Soon after leaving Mous, we had to pass through a country village, the inhabitants of which seemed to anticipate our arrival, and to know what we were most likely to want. The road was lined for a considerable distance with old and young people, proffering water to us from every imaginable kind of dish. The sight of the clear, pure liquid was the severest temptation, I think, I ever endured. I was at the head of the company, close beside a young lieutenant, who immediately exclaimed, "Here, who wants water now?" "I do, sir," I replied, and, stepping out of the ranks, laid hold of a jug. On the instant, however, my captain sprang forward, and striking my knapsack with the flat side of his sword, cried out, "You young vagabond, go to the ranks; do you want to be flogged?" I did not, but I was very thirsty; yet I had to relinquish the jug without tasting the water, and quickly resumed my place in the ranks. We passed on, a melancholy band, through these two files of kindly people, urging us to drink; and yet we neither dared touch, taste, nor handle. This was discipline, as understood by Colonel Maxwell. I hope he never suffered what we poor soldiers suffered that day. On the following day we had three more men flogged in a large field. Their "crimes" I forget. They were probably of little moment. After this other exhibition, we continued our miserable march as before. It was late at night before we reached our billets. It was always so during this march under Colonel Maxwell. If there were no floggings, which was rare, on the conclusion of the day's march, we were paraded and exercised in field manoeuvres until late at night. During the first six days of this march 102 men had been flogged in all. The march lasted fourteen days. The floggings certainly diminished in number, but I suspect I would not be far wrong in estimating that, during the remaining eight days, other 102 men suffered from the lash for trifling offences.

Our march ended in Paris, where we were quartered in Montmartre, near the Barriere St. Denis. Here the last flogging ordered by Colonel Maxwell took place. The houses around seemed to be of a good class. They were deserted, however, and showed many signs of having been roughly handled, many, if not most, of the windows having been broken. That in which the present court-martial was held was a large building, surrounded by a high wall, within which was enclosed a large garden. Here the regiment was able to parade without being exposed to the

public gaze—a merciful dispensation for the public, considering the scene that was about to be enacted. The victim was a man named Duncan. He had appeared at evening parade a little tipsy, but his corporal charged him with being drunk. This he stoutly denied, and he was ordered to the rear to be put through his “facings”—the usual test (and a trying one) applied to drunkards. Duncan hesitated, and the corporal gave him a push towards the rear. Duncan, irritated, returned, perhaps with interest, what he considered an indignity; and for this he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to receive three hundred lashes. The regiment was soon after paraded, and formed in hollow square; the sentence of the Court was read out, the culprit was ordered to strip, and then bound tightly to the hideous and well-used triangle. He remained in this position, suffering the keen torture of the lash, for two hours and twenty minutes. I carefully noted the time. I was orderly at the gate that day, and, just as the court-martial’s sentence was about to be read, a gentleman came to the gate, and remained there until the sentence was carried out. He made frequent entries in a note-book, which he held in his hand, and kept looking every now and then at his watch. This made me look at mine, and so note the time poor Duncan was on the triangle. We found, soon after, that other gentlemen had been observing the course of the regiment, and carefully noting the disgraceful conduct of Colonel Maxwell. There had been numerous letters in the London papers, describing the many revolting scenes witnessed in our march from Mous.

Perhaps Colonel Maxwell had seen these letters, or heard of them. I don’t know. But, as soon as Duncan had been removed after his flogging, the Colonel made a speech, in which he stated that, in assuming the command of the regiment, he had received a character of it that he was beginning to think it did not deserve. It surely did not say much for the judgment or humanity of a commander to proceed to punish before ascertaining the nature and extent of the criminal’s guilt. But, he went on, believing in the bad character we had received, he had considered it his duty to be somewhat severe; and no one then disputed his severity: most of us would have used a much harsher term. He trusted, however, he added, that by our future good conduct, he would be able to lay severity wholly aside. To do him justice he did so. He seemed altogether to change. He appeared to be constantly thinking of the comfort of his men, and on the numerous field days, when the Duke of Wellington reviewed his forces in honour of Royal and Imperial personages, we frequently had good reason to thank Colonel Maxwell for his considerate attention to our comfort. Often, if only for a few minutes, in the midst of the review, we felt the blessing of “standing at ease,” while all around us were braced upright, with carried arms. In quarters the Colonel became equally attentive to our comfort and

well-being. While other commanders discouraged saving, on the absurd notion that the less money a soldier had, the less he could spend in drink, Colonel Maxwell encouraged it in every possible way. In short, so successful was the Colonel's policy of kindness that, when he left the command, I believe there was scarcely a man in the regiment who did not regret his loss. If colonels generally would try Colonel Maxwell's better policy of considerate kindness before resorting to the system of inhuman cruelty, under the spurious pretence that it was necessary for discipline, many regiments would bear a better character than they do.

Colonel Maxwell had to suffer for his cruelty. The letters published in the newspapers seem to have awakened public indignation in England, and the Commander-in-Chief saw fit to order a Court of Inquiry into our Colonel's conduct. The finding of this Court led to what is termed a General Court-Martial, for the trial of Colonel Maxwell. We were naturally much interested in the trial, and we subscribed in groups for copies of some of the very dear and indifferent newspapers of the time, but the proceedings continued so long that we tired of them and the expense incurred. The upshot, I believe, was that Colonel Maxwell was dismissed the service, whether cashiered, or compelled to retire on half-pay, I never ascertained with certainty.

The regiment was now under a very different dispensation. Colonel Maxwell was succeeded in the command by Lieutenant-Colonel J. Marian Nooth, who, during the first twelve months of his command had one man flogged. What a contrast to his ruthless predecessor! At a similar rate he would have required a hundred years to flog as many as Colonel Maxwell did in one week. The effects of this difference of treatment were soon visible in the conduct and discipline of the men. Under Major M'Queen and Colonel Maxwell, the character of the regiment had greatly degenerated. Under Colonel Nooth it was brought to the greatest degree of proficiency I ever beheld in any regiment. We were proud of it, and became tenderly sensitive lest any blot should fall upon it. The men now dreaded punishment, whereas under Colonel Maxwell they had become indifferent to it. Its infliction seemed to have become so much a matter of course, that most of the men were hopeless of avoiding it. Under this reign of terror crime increased; under the benignant sway of Colonel Nooth it sensibly diminished. Under Colonel Maxwell I had heard it frequently remarked that they would not forego a "night's spree" even for the risk of receiving three hundred lashes. Under Colonel Nooth the feeling was altogether reversed. They would, I believe, have given up two "nights' sprees" rather than have exposed themselves to the risk of the indignity of punishment. With all this we were better soldiers as well as improved men. We had always been pretty well reported upon by Inspecting Generals; but I very well

remember one occasion sometime after Colonel Nooth had taken the command, when our evolutions generally, and especially the volley-firing, surprised the Inspecting General into several admiring exclamations. The regiment was about a thousand strong. We were drawn up in line, and had fired by companies with great precision. A regimental volley was then ordered. It is rare to have such a thing perfectly done. There are almost always some, who, from nervousness or some other cause, fire too soon or too late, and thus spoil the effect. On the occasion of which I am speaking the Colonel gave the command "make ready ;" then "present." There was a long pause. Then came "recover arms ;" and this was done without a shot having been fired. These commands were repeated with a like result. But again we were ordered to "present," next to "fire ;" and the volley was heard as one shot. It was splendid. I have never heard it so perfectly done. The Inspecting General was evidently delighted ; and said so. I had never before heard so glowing a report as he subsequently gave of that inspection. Constant flogging, it will be seen, was not, therefore, conducive either to good conduct, good discipline, or regimental efficiency. Speaking from my own experience, I should say it was the resource only of incompetent commanders, and the general result was disastrous.

Good-conduct soldiers enjoyed several privileges while in Paris ; one of the most greatly prized of which was frequent leave of absence to view the sights of the French capital. On these occasions my most favourite resort was the Jardin des Plants. It was a new world of wonders to me, and I spent hours and hours in watching the queer, the pretty, and the savage animals there gathered together. I did not then know anything of the great Cuvier, who was then in the prime of life, dwelling near the gardens, and must have been at that time engaged on some of his most important works. I saw, however, his anatomical collection in the building where he delivered his luminous lectures to the students. Of course, however, I went through the city of Paris, examining its peculiarities in a casual way. It was then a dirty town, and the narrow, dark, and often tortuous streets, inclined towards the centre, where ran a black, lazy stream of thick sewage matter, which stunk horribly. At night the aspect of the city, in many parts at all events, was anything but picturesque. The lighting was bad in the extreme. The dingy street lamps were hung in the middle of the streets, on ropes swung from the buildings on each side, and their flickering, sometimes sputtering, oily flame only served to make darkness visible. But these things have been all altered since 1815. One view in Paris I used to admire greatly. It was the scene from Montmartre. Take it in the summer time, just after sunrise, the sun shining full upon the city and country beyond, the houses white and lofty, relieved and freshened by the soft green of the

numerous and luxuriant trees, the gilded domes of Notre Dame and other stately buildings looking bright in the fresh, crisp morning sunshine, the blue smoke of the wood fires curling aloft in the clear calm of the early morning air, made a picture which a Turner might have imitated.

We felt the winter very cold ; not so much so, perhaps, as in Holland, or even in Scotland ; but in Paris there seemed to be few contrivances for artificial heat. We had no fire-places in our rooms, and, of course, no fires. We had no beds, no straw even, and had, therefore, to sleep on the brick floor. The wind blew keenly through the windows, and effectually prevented perspiration. We sought permission to gather the stubble from the reaped fields, but it was refused ; and we, as a last resort, huddled together in half-dozens, disposing of the six small blankets—we had one each—so as to produce the greatest possible comfort. But it was not much, and the cold wind touched us keenly.

The MS. here ends abruptly. It was certainly my father's intention to continue his "Reminiscences" further, especially to give some account of his experience in other parts of France ; but death interrupted and closed his labours. I shall add but little. He returned home in due time with his regiment. His discharge was soon afterwards purchased by his parents, and he resumed the trade he was learning when he enlisted. But he was a diligent student—read much, and pretty constantly ; and, having married, sought to better his position. For a time he managed a business carried on by a company called, I think, "The Economists." Then he started business for himself ; and a "sair warstle" he had in it. His heart seemed to be in teaching. After the day's business was over, nothing seemed to please him better than when he had turned the "back shop" into a kind of school-room, with such of his family as were old enough—and any others that chose to come—ranged round the improvised desk, deep in the intricacies of arithmetic, the wonders of geography, or the mysteries of French. He was of mature years when he entered on his teaching functions in the East Parish School ; but he undertook the task with real pleasure, and continued to throw the energy and zeal of real pleasure into his work to the end. He had the reputation of being a successful teacher. A number of his old scholars bore testimony to this in an address presented to him a short time before his death. In that address they said :—

A few of your old pupils desire to express the love and esteem they bear to you, and their estimate of the manner you have conducted this school for so many years. They esteem it a

singular privilege that they have enjoyed the advantage of the tuition of one so well qualified in every way for the all-important position you have held. They recognise the painstaking and earnest manner you have performed the duties pertaining to that position, and attribute to your ability and care the honourable positions that many of your old pupils now occupy. Their intercourse with you, from first to last, has been as children to a father who was ever anxious for their welfare.

You have now retired into private life, to enjoy that ease which an honoured old age deserves, with the best wishes of hundreds who will feel the influence of your Christian character through life.

I venture to think that this was not flattery.

L. K.



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